

LETTERS

WRITTEN TO

J. M. a Nonconformist Teacher,

Concerning the

Gift and Forms

OF

PRAYER.

The Second PART.

By MATTHEW HOLE, B. D. sometime
Fellow of Exeter College, Oxon. now Vicar
of Stoke-gursey in Somersetshire.

L O N D O N :

Printed for, and are to be sold by J. Taylor and T. Becket,
Booksellers in London; H. Clements in Oxon., and
J. Miller in Sherborn, Dorset. 1699.

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THE PREFACE.

THE Occasion of this Second Part of Letters was briefly this: When the Author had withstood the first Assault of the Adversaries Papers, hoping to have clos'd up and rested there; he was set upon afresh by another Packet, the Adversary designing either to weary him with Work, or to worry him with Cavils and so to make him drop the Cause, to be rid of the Labour and Trouble of defending it.

Hereupon, the Author knowing the Wiles and Artifices of the Party, and how apt they are to triumph without a Victory, found it necessary to take this Second Packet into Consideration: And the better to bring this Matter to some good Issue, began to treat with the Adversary upon his own Concessions; which

if stood to, seem'd to bid fair for a Reconciliation: But he fearing a Snake in the Grass, and doubting lest by yielding one Thing after another, he might be drawn in to give up the whole Cause, abruptly broke off the Treaty, return'd the Authors Letters, and would hear no more of an Accommodation.

That the World therefore might see the inexcusable Obstinacy and Perverseness of the Man, the Author was desir'd to Publish this Second Part; in which not only the trifling Exceptions of the Adversary, but all the material Objections of the whole Party are briefly discuss'd; and that with as much Mildness and Gentleness too, as the Cause could well admit of: For the Reader will find, that nothing bites but Truth; and all the Salt and Smartness in it is design'd meerly to season the Discourse, and not to fret the Party.

I know the Adversaries Complaint is hard Usage, which is wont to be the last Refuge of a bad Cause; and this
hath

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hath betray'd him into an indecent Passion, and many unseemly Expressions, which are to be pass'd by as the Follies and Frailties of depraved Nature: But how little Reason there is for this Complaint, any wise Reader may easily discern; for he hath been rather gently stroak'd than roughly handled, and Corrosives have been never us'd, but where Lenitives could work no Effect. A necessary and seasonable Rebuke hath been ever reckon'd among the good Offices of a Friend, not the Wounds of an Enemy: And I think upon the right understanding of the whole Matter, the Adversary may see greater Cause to commend the Faithfulness, than to complain of the Hardship of such Usage.

After this Second Part was gone out of my Hands to the Press, there comes forth a Book, Entituled, A Contract Answer to my Correct Copy of Letters: In which, besides some Cavils and rude Calumnies (the usual Effects of Choler and the feeble Supports

of a sinking Cause) the Reader will find nothing material, that is not replied to in the following Letters.

In the Preface he tells us, “ That a
“ Civil Peace being restor’d, ’tis
“ greatly desir’d, that the Ceremo-
“ nial War were at an end. Now
are not these Peaceable Men, to continue
a War with their Superiors upon Mat-
ters of meer Ceremony? Or can they
be thought to desire Peace, who resolve
to differ and contend about such indiffe-
rent Things? But how would they have
this Ceremonial War ended? Must Go-
vernors submit to them, or they to Go-
vernors? For this is the great Question.
If they would but know their Station,
and pay the Duty they owe to the Lawful
Commands of those that are set over
them, this Ceremonial War would soon
cease; but if nothing will please them,
but to over-rule Authority, and do as
they list; ’tis plain they are Enemies to
Peace, and whilst they speak thereof,
are but making ready for Battel.

So

The Preface.

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So that themselves are plainly the Persons he speaks of in the following Words, who instead of allaying, inflame the Differences and Animosities at home: For are not Conventicles the Nurseries of Discord and Division? And do not all the Flames of Contention and Animosity arise and break out from thence? This all Men see but Themselves, who are too wise to be in an Error, and too holy to be in a Fault.

'Tis with great Reluctance (he saith) that he bears any part in this present Controversy: Though himself began it by reviling the Doctrin and Discipline of the Church; and still continues it, by abusing the People with false Notions of Both without any Reluctance.

However being engag'd, Necessity (he saith) extorted an Answer to my Letters: Now what was this Necessity? Why, there was a double Necessity in the Case; the one to answer the Importunity of the Party, that would

not be satisfied without it. The other to keep up the Ceremonial War, which else would soon come to a happy end. To prevent which, he hath revok'd or at least omitted some Concessions in the Print, which were granted in his Original Papers, beside other gross Prevocations, too many to be here recited.

In the next place, To excuse his Excursions, he complains of my Rambling, which is the old way of shifting a Fault, by charging it on another: In proving of which he falls into this evident Mistake, viz. That I discours'd in my Sermon, not of Prayer in general, but only of Vocal, or as he calls it, Ministerial Prayer; which is a notorious Falsity, and the rotten Foundation of his whole Book; For my Design was to Treat of the Gift of Prayer in general, Mental as well as Vocal. Both which agree in the Nature of Prayer, and differ only in the manner of performing it, the one being done with Silence, and the other with the Voice, which are only Cir-

Cicumstances of the Duty, and therefore I plac'd the Gift of Prayer (as it should be) in something that was Common and Necessary to both these ; to wit, not in an ability of Expressions, which is nothing else, but the Gift of Speech applied to the Matter of Prayer, and is peculiar only to vocal Prayer ; but in an ability of lifting up the Heart in Holy Desires and Devotion unto God, which is common to mental and vocal Prayer, and necessary to the right performance of both. Again,

*To exclude mental Prayer out of the Controversy, he would exclude it out of the Devotions of the Church: Whereas if we search into the Devotions of the antient Christians, we shall find the silent Breathings of mental Prayer, made up a great part of them : Their publick Service was performed partly *σιωπῆς* with Silence ; and partly *ᾠδῶν καὶ ᾠχηθῶν*, with the use of the Voice : And we read of secret mental Prayers us'd by Christians in the publick Assemblies,*

blies, in the Intervals between the publick Offices, when all the Congregation kept Silence, and these were made and offer'd up, as St. Cyprian tells us, Tacite & Modeste inter ipsas Pectoris Latebras. Silently and Modestly within the Secrets of their own Breasts. So that as the Nature, So the Gift of Prayer must be so defin'd, as to extend to, and comprize both: The not knowing or considering this hath led him into this Mistake, of restraining the Gift of Prayer only to that which is Vocal ; by which means he passeth by that which is Essential and Common with it to the several kinds of Prayer, viz. the elevation of the Heart ; and places the Gift of it in an Ability of Expressions, which belongs only to vocal Prayer, and that too not as 'tis Prayer, but only as 'tis Vocal, which hath occasion'd that vulgar Error, of calling the Gift of Speech applied to the Matter of Prayer, by the Name of the Gift of Prayer.

This

This plainly shews the Falshood of what he affirms about the State of the Question, that 'tis not concerning Prayer in general: And likewise the Absurdity of what follows, in calling his Gift of free Prayer, by the Name of Ministerial Prayer: As if the great Work and Duty of the Ministry, lay in Praying by these Effusions, and none were to be admitted to the Ministerial Function, that cannot or will not venture to Pray Extempore. But is not Praying by a Liturgy or publick Forms Ministerial Prayer? And are there no well qualified Ministers in the Church of England, because they do not presume to utter any things hastily before God, or use this Talent of free Prayer:

Beside, do not many among the Laity Exercise, and as he saith, Excel too in this Gift? How comes it then to be stil'd Ministerial Prayer? Do the People invade the Ministers Office, when they Pray Extempore? Into what gross Absurdities hath these wrong Notions led him?

him? And yet upon these and many other Mistakes is his whole Answer grounded, which having so bad a Foundation, all the Frame and Superstructure rais'd upon it must fall with it.

*"Yet he is fully satisfied (he saith)
 "That sincere Prayer, whether
 "conceiv'd or compos'd, is as ill
 "chosen an Enemy as any can
 "light on; for 'tis dangerous to ex-
 "pose, and difficult to conquer it.*

*Now, how tender soever he may be of conceived Prayers; 'tis plain, he can load compos'd Devotion with the blackest Reproaches; for Liturgies are with him only the Brats and Imps of Darkness, the effects of the Ignorance and Laziness of the Clergy, and the product of a Dark and degenerate Age. "Whereas free
 "Prayer (he saith) is the Issue of
 "a Meridian Light, and none can
 "triumph in the Conquest of it.
 For the Proof of which, he tells us of a Triumphant Paper in the time of the Civil Wars, that had this Expression in it,
 Nil*

Nil restat Superare Regem, &c. which being Ambiguous (*he saith*) was construed in a double Sense, viz. *Either that nothing remain'd, but for the King to conquer the Prayers of the Fanaticks, or for the Prayers of Fanaticks to conquer the King: And the Fanaticks Prayers it seems had the best on't, for they brought that good King to the Block, and made three once flourishing Kingdoms miserable and unhappy ever since: A glorious and triumphant Atchievment of Extempore Prayer. Moreover, it seems by him, That the Oaths of the one Party were Extempore Effusions, as well as the Prayers of the other, and 'tis not easy to say, which did the most Mischief.*

“ But he is not (*he saith*) upon
“ equal Terms with the Vicar in
“ this Controversie: *How so? Does the Inequality lie in the goodness of the Vicars Cause? That's a great Inequality indeed. Or does it lie in the greater Power and Authority that backs it? This*
is

is true too (tho' he will scarce acknowledg it) for the one is establish'd, and the other only wink'd at: But the Vicar may say any thing against free Prayer; And hath not he said the worst he can against Liturgies? 'Tis to be fear'd, if some Men had the Power, they would scarce give the liberty they take; and this Shew of Modesty, is only an Excuse for their too great Boldness.

But there are some dainty Remarks in the Close of his Preface, that must not be pass'd by. As

First, he very wisely blames me for not printing a Letter, that was never intended for the Press, but design'd only for a private Check of his Vanity, in exposing the Liturgy as defective upon a particular Occasion: And likewise for disparaging some Reverend Clergy-men, in a Matter that plainly appear'd to be a Notorious Falsity.

Secondly, He complains that I corrected my Letters, before they were sent to the Press: Now I think he is the first Person,

Person, that ever blam'd any Author for so doing; which is so far from a Fault, that it would be great Folly in any to do otherwise: And yet he hath instill'd this silly Objection into his credulous Followers, who are thereby persuaded, that 'tis as necessary to print as to pray Extempore. But

That which renders this monstrously gross and inexcusable, is, that himself, or some Body for him, hath far out-gone me, in the very thing he complains of: For tho' my Letters had only the ordinary and usual Corrections that Books are wont to have that are sent to the Press, and all the Additions and Alterations may be compriz'd in a Phrase-leaf; his are contracted, chang'd and almost corrected all away; insomuch that tho' I had seen and read the Letters before, and have a Copy of them by me, yet they are so alter'd, that I can scarce know them again. And tho' J. M. be in the Title-Page, yet for the most part, I am to seek for the True Author.

Now

Now if the little I did in this kind were well done, why does he complain? If it were ill done, why does he imitate it? Yea, and run so far into the other Extreme? For his are not only corrected, but for the most part made anew; and like some of our old Ships, have undergone so many Emendations, that few of the first Materials are remaining. But

There is yet a worse thing than all this, for tho' he grants that he denied me a Correct Copy, and his Consent for publishing them, any otherwise than by the first rude Draught which must have unavoidably expos'd him to the World, and might have afforded just cause of Complaint, yet he still complains of what I said of his not consenting to publish them; which shews that either he doth not know, or will not own when he is civilly dealt with.

I shall detain the Reader no longer from looking into the Merits of the Cause, when I have minded him of one Thing, viz. That the Party having with much difficulty procur'd this Book, they have now got something to say, namely that mine is answer'd, tho' it matters not how, or by whom. And tho' any understanding Reader may easily see the Weakness of it, yet they triumph in it as an unanswerable Piece, and resolve before-hand not to hear or read any thing, that may be said or written against it; which shews them to be very just and impartial Judges.

However, since such weak, or rather wilful Persons, who are impatient of Truth, and resolve to shut both their Eyes and Ears against it, do thereby plainly appear to be prejudiced and incompetent Judges in the Case: The whole Matter is referr'd to the better Judgment of more knowing and less-biass'd Readers. Farewell.

LET-

LETTER I.

To J. M.

S I R,

I Receiv'd another Packet of Letters from you, in which I find you trying your Skill in making some Replies to my former Letters concerning the Gift and Forms of Prayer; but to how little purpose, I hope to make you sensible by degrees: And to that end, all that you offer in them, of any moment, shall be consider'd in due time and order.

1 First then, for the Letters that concern the Gift of Prayer, your own Concessions seem to bid fair towards an Accomodation: For you begin to see, that an Ability or Variety of Expressions are (tho' vulgarly, yet) improperly and abusively styl'd, The Gift of Prayer. For in your Letter of *April 1st*, you tell me, you can well enough grant that such an Ability as you mention, is not properly the Gift of Prayer, and that 'tis only the Gift of uttering Prayer; and comfort your self with this, That however improper it may be, you are not the first that have so styl'd it. This is a good Concession, if you would keep to it; for hereby you may see Prayer to be no Verbal, but Spiritual thing; and consists mainly in the inward Desires and Breathings of the Soul after God. In your

B

Letter

Letter of *April 15th*, you own this Ability to be such a Gift as that, by which the Pharisees, Hypocrites, and all wicked Men are said to pray : Which must be very improperly call'd by the sacred Name of Prayer ; since 'tis All no better than an Abomination to the Lord.

If then this Gift doth not properly lie there, there must be some other thing in which it may be more properly placed : And the Knowledge of that would clear up this matter. What then should that be ? Why, we see it must lie either in the Heart or the Tongue ; (*i. e.*) either in the pious motions of the one, or in the nimble and ready motion of the other. Now I think you will scarce venture to put it in the nimbleness of the Tongue, which is apt to run too fast, and out of the way too, and may not be trusted without a Bridle : And therefore the Psalmist resolved to keep his Mouth as it were with a Bridle, to restrain its Extravagance, and to look to his Ways, that he might not offend with his Tongue. And *St. James* tells us, That *He that offends not with his tongue, (especially when let loose) must be a perfect man.* So that this Gift cannot be safely plac'd there ; especially since the whole Work and Business of Prayer may be perform'd without it. Now if you would but speak out, and make the Heart the proper place of it, which is indeed the true Seat of all Devotion, there might be a speedy end of that part of the Controversy.

And the better to encourage you to speak out, in a matter of this Consequence, consider (*Sir*) the three different ways of addressing or drawing nigh unto God, (*viz.*)

1. The First is with the Heart, and that is performed by the inward Desires and Elevations of

of the Mind and Soul to him ; and this is very truly and properly styled Prayer, and is all that is Essential to it.

2. The Second is with the Lips, when the Heart is far from Him : And this may be rather called vain talking and babling, than praying to him.

3. The Third is with the Heart and Lips together, (that is) when the Heart and the Tongue accompany each other. And this is that Vocal Prayer used in publick ; whereby we are enabled, with one Mind and one Mouth, to glorifie our Great Creator. Now here two things are carefully to be distinguish'd ; the one is an Ability of lifting up the Heart in holy Desires unto God : And this is properly the Gift of Prayer ; the other is an Ability of expressing those Desires, and putting them into fit Words : And this is properly the Gift of Speech, Utterance and Elocution ; the use whereof in Prayer, is to help us to join together in our Requests, and to put up the same Petitions. And this is far better done in the known consider'd Words of godly Forms, than the sudden Effusions of free Prayer.

(Sir) If you well consider and digest this, your Eyes might soon open, and discern between the Gift of Prayer, and the Gift of Speech ; and that the Heart is the proper Seat of the one, as the Tongue is of the other. The confounding of these two different things, hath confounded your Notions about it ; whereas the distinguishing between them, would shew you the different Nature and Place of both. And this is the more carefully to be distinguished and attended to, because the want of it hath led many into great and dangerous Mistakes :

For he that can use most new Words, and hath the best Faculty of changing and varying Phrases, is by too many, thought to pray best. And the ordinary Gift of Prayer which you talk so much of, and would have studied and practis'd by Ministers and People, is nothing else than this Faculty of Variations ; which is rather a hindrance than furtherance of true Devotion : And yet you seem to put the Life and Spirit of Prayer chiefly in it : For you tell me, That the same Words are apt to deaden and cloy ; and that all Men are delighted with Varieties and new things. And to shew what a mighty Stress you lay upon such Novelties, your Brethren are wont to ask, whether he that sings still the same Song, or is always telling the same Story, would not make those that hear him, to grow weary and sick of them? Thence inferring, that the daily and constant use of the same Prayers, will have the same Effect upon the Minds of the People, who are therefore to be entertain'd with new.

But is there no difference (think you) between these things? Are not Songs and Stories, things merely intended to gratifie the Senses, and please the Fancy, which is best taken with new things? And are these to be compar'd with the sublime and weighty Matters of Religion, which are design'd to affect the Heart, and are still exercis'd about the same things? The Diversions of humane Life, best attain their end, by Change and Variety ; but must we be given to change too in Matters of Religion, and hunt about for new Words and Phrases, when we address to God for the same things? I hope you do not think that God Almighty is taken with new things, since all the Pleasure of them
is

is occasion'd chiefly from Suddenness and Surprise; and therefore cannot affect him, to whom nothing can be new: And we find wise Men, who are govern'd more by Judgment than Fancy, are but little affected with such things. So that 'tis only vulgar Minds and such as are mostly led by Imagination, that are thus taken with the Novelty and Sound of Words; and seek about for Variety of Expressions. Now this is a Weakness in them, which you should be so far from cherishing and encouraging, that you ought rather to use your best Skill, to perswade them out of it; and to let them know, that God neither expects nor is delighted with these things. For true Religion inclines still to the doing and speaking the same things: He that endeavours to keep up a constant Reverence and Fear of God in his Heart; and by a daily continued Practice, desires the same Blessings in the same Words, shall be more soberly and religiously devout, and find better Acceptance with him, than he that loves and labours for new Words, and thinks he shall not be accepted without a Multitude or Variety of Expressions: The Study whereof is more apt to distract, than compose the Mind, in this Duty.

Indeed, where God in his Providence hath done any new thing, either by sending some new Judgment or Calamity; or by bestowing some new Mercy or Deliverance; here, in our publick Fasts and Thanksgivings there must be such new Words, as may suit such Occasions: And (Thanks be to God) the pious Care and Wisdom of our Governours, is never wanting to make a due and suitable Provision for us, on such Occasions: But for the constant Matter of

our daily Prayers and Praises, there can be no need of new Words, but only to bring new Hearts and good Affections, in the use of the old well-digested Words, and Composures of the Church. We read of our Saviour's praying three times most earnestly, using the same Words; so that these can neither hinder the Earnestness, nor the Efficacy of true Devotion. In the Prayer that Christ gave his Disciples, and in all the Prayers he put up himself, he hath left no Command or Example, for such unnecessary Variation; but rather the quite contrary; and therefore you are to consider further, how you will excuse it from Superstition, to think that God is pleas'd with many and new Words; or displeas'd without them: Which is to place Religion in things which God hath no where requir'd at your hands, and to lay a doctrinal Necessity in the Inventions of Men: Which is a piece of Will-worship and Superstition.

As for the Multitude of Words, *Solomon* hath shew'd that to be an Occasion
 Prov. 10. 19. of Sin, and an Instance of great
 Eccles. 5. 2. Folly; and therefore wills that our
 Words unto God should be few:
 And our Blessed Saviour condemned the *Πολυλογία*, or much
 Matth. 5. speaking of the Heathens, and all
 that imitate them.

And as for the Change and Variety of Expressions in Prayer, there is not the least Colour of a Command or Encouragement for it in Holy Scripture; for tho' we are bid [*To pray*
 Ephes. 6. 18. *with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.*] That is by the same Apostle expounded of the several parts of Prayer, but is under-

understood by none, of *extempore* 1 Tim 2. 12.
 or varied Prayers. So that to
 make it a Ministerial Duty, to pray without
 Book ; and to put the Vulgar upon beating their
 Brains for new Phrases, as a more spiritual way
 of praying; cannot be excused from Vanity
 and Superstition. Yea, a Learned and Ingeni-
 ous Divine hath shew'd this to be a sort of Ido-
 latry: " For the Mis-representation of God,
 " and worshipping him according to that Mis-
 " representation is the Sin of Idolatry. Now,
 to think to please God with new and varied
 Phrases in Prayer, is to mis-represent him; and
 to take him for such an one as our selves: and
 by offering up such Prayers, we worship him
 according to that Image and false Representation
 of him: And therefore 'twill be hard to excuse
 this Practice from the Sin of Idolatry: " Yea,
 " such Persons, not only represent God under
 " the Shape of a Man, but pray to him as re-
 " presented under the Weaknesses of a Man.
 " And certainly, if the Mis-representation of
 " the Object makes the Idolatry; by how much
 " the worse the Representation is, by so much
 " the grosser must the Idolatry be.

(Sir) If you will thoroughly weigh and con-
 sider these things, you will find, That the main
 Work and Business of Prayer lies in the Heart
 and the good Motions of it: And therefore the
 Gift or Ability of performing it, must properly
 be placed there.

So that your great Mistake all this while,
 hath been in taking the Gift of wording Prayer,
 for the Gift of Prayer: To rectifie which, you
 must know that Words are no part of Prayer;
 or if they were, the well-consider'd and di-

gested Words of a Form, are far more agreeable to the Nature and Dignity of this Duty, and the Majesty we address to, in it; than any present and hasty Expressions. And consequently, the Gift of composing pious and well-ordered Forms for publick and private Devotion, is in this Sense far more fitly styl'd, the Gift of Prayer, than your Talent of Extemporary Effusions.

But at last, I find you (in that Letter of *April 15th*) acknowledging, that the offering up pious Desires to God, without the use of any Words, is Prayer in a proper Sense; and that pious Souls who are duly affected with their Wants, Sins, and Mercies, may be said to have the Gift of Praying acceptably to God in a spiritual manner, without them: Where you seem to place the Gift of Prayer, as it should be, in the Heart: Yea, all your own Arguments and Distinctions, if well consider'd, do most properly and principally place it there. For, what you call the special, internal, devout, spiritual, and successful Gift, is truly the Gift or Grace of Prayer: And what you style the common, external and artificial Gift, is properly the Gift of Speech, Utterance and Elocution applyed to the Duty of Prayer. And for the Novelty and Variety of Words, you grant in your Letter of *April 1st*, that 'tis no further necessary, than as the various Matter and Occasions require. So that (Thanks be to God) by these Concessions, that part of the Controversie is come to a pretty good Issue.

It remains then that you endeavour to undeceive the People, and take them off from their vain and high Thoughts of this Verbal Gift:

(9)

Gift: That they may return to the Ancient, Publick, and Devout Prayers of the Church, from which they have ignorantly swerved.

I am

July 24th,
1697.

Tours in all true Affection,

M. H.

L E T T E R II.

S I R,

I Consider'd in my last, the Letters relating to the Gift of Prayer; and finding nothing of moment objected against them, that may need or deserve a farther Answer; I proceed to the Letters that relate to Forms of Prayer: About which, two Things are chiefly to be considered (*viz.*) (1st) their Lawfulness, and (2dly) their Expediency. And that we may bring Things to some good Issue, I will shew, how far we are agreed, that we may the better compromise Matters where we differ.

1. First then, We are agreed about the lawfulness of Forms of Prayer: For, in your Letter of (*June 28th*) you acknowledge Forms to be in themselves lawful; and to some, needful; and complain of your being mis-represented by some, as Enemies to all Forms. Your Oracle, [Mr. Baxter] frequently asserts the lawfulness of them, and withal declares, "That

*Disputation of
Liturgy, Pro-
position 10.*

"the

“ the disuse of Forms, is apt to breed a giddi-
 “ ness in Religion, and to make Men Hypocrites,
 “ who delude themselves with Conceits that they
 “ delight in God, when it is but in these No-
 “ velties and varieties of Expression that they
 “ are delighted; and therefore adviseth Forms,

Reason, Dis- “ to fix Christians and make them
 course. “ sound. And another Brother of

yours acknowledges, “ That their
 “ Labours are profitable, who have drawn the
 “ matter of Prayer into Forms.

Now, these Concessions, one would think,
 were a fair step to a Reconciliation; and might
 lay a good Foundation for Peace and Unity:
 For this Principle, if well observ'd and follow'd,
 would bring all to the Church, and help them
 to join in the same Forms of Publick Worship,
 from which, nothing but their unlawfulness, can
 justify a Separation. St. Paul wills us [*To do
 what in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men,*]
 Rom. 12. 18. and more especially with the Church
 whereof we are Members: And elsewhere re-
 quires us, To use our utmost Endeavours [*To
 keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*]
 Ephes. 4. 2 Now does it not lie in us, to do
 what we lawfully may? Should we not go as far
 as we can, for the sake of Peace and Unity?
 Especially when we are commanded to do so, by
 lawful Authority? And what a mighty influence
 would this Amicable and Christian Temper have,
 to promote Unity, and prevent Divisions? For
 if we lawfully may, and ought (as this Prin-
 ciple teaches) to agree in offering up the same
 Prayer (which will have the greater force
 from the benefit of Concord and Unanimity)
 why should we break into Parties, and put up
 different and contrary Petitions, which must
 lose

lose all their Efficacy, from the mischief of Division?

'Tis evident (Sir,) that you can and do upon occasion join in the Publick Prayers of the Church : Which shews you are satisfied both in the lawfulness and use of them : Now, what should hinder you from doing that, always for the sake of Peace, which you can do sometimes, to serve some other Turn ? Was ever Peace and Unity valued at so low a rate among Christians, as to refuse to do what they lawfully may to preserve it ?

As for what you object of renouncing the Covenant, as a hinderance ; That is long since out of doors, and cannot now with any shew or colour of Reason be pretended : Only you find it in Mr. *Baxter*, and being something to say, you cannot forbear to use it, tho' the Author and the Covenant too, are both laid asleep in their Graves.

As for Re-ordination, which you mention as another hinderance : Neither can that affect you, being (if I am not mis-inform'd) ordain'd by a Bishop.

And as for Assent and Consent to all that is Established, which you talk so often, and so much of ; tho' it be in its self very reasonable, and no more than is required in all Established Churches and Societies, yet if you cannot presently come to it, you are to acquiesce and wait for farther Satisfaction ; which, if you bring but a willing and humble Mind, you may soon have : In the mean time, you are to continue as a private Member of the Church, without disturbing the Peace of it, either by separating from it your self, or drawing the People from it, by Objections wherein they are no way concern'd.

This

This (Sir,) is unquestionably your Duty, if you will keep a good Conscience, and shew that Modesty that becomes you, without giving Offence to that Church, whereof you were Baptiz'd a Member, and Ordain'd a Minister.

But the Misery is, tho' you are driven by the evidence of Truth, to own the lawfulness of Forms, yet there is nothing which you more universally decry and disuse in the Practice ; even when enjoyn'd by that Power, which in all lawful Things you are bound to obey. This is a gross inconsistency, and plainly shews that you have no mind to do what you safely may, to promote Peace. Is not this to act quite contrary to the Apostles Advice, [*Nevertheless whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Things?*] Phil. 3. 16. Where he wills us, to go hand in hand together, as far as we can ; and not to differ or break off from the use or practice of those Things, wherein we are agreed. If we have attain'd to the Knowledge and Belief of the lawfulness of Forms, we are here required to join together in the use of them, when the Peace of the Church, and the Authority of Superiours make it necessary.

Certainly (Sir,) he that will not do what he may, to preserve Unity, is an Enemy to Peace, and hath another Game to play, that is better promoted by Divisions : And he that will not obey Magistrates in lawful and indifferent Things, shakes off the Yoke, and will obey only what he pleases.

But there is not (say you) a clearer Proof against Impositions, than the following Words, [*If any be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you ;*] not Man by his Laws, enforce it upon you. But how is this to be revealed unto you ?

you? I hope you do not expect an immediate Revelation, or voice from Heaven to satisfy you in this Matter; or think that you are safe enough in your Error, till you have such a Revelation to convince you: Is it not sufficient, that God hath in his Word revealed this unto you, by appointing Forms of Prayer and Praises both in the Old and New Testament? And what clearer Revelation will you have of this Divine Truth? Yea, is not this Ordinance of God, Established by the Ordinance of Man too, which we are commanded to submit unto [*for the Lord's sake*]? *If you believe not Moses and the Prophets* (as our Saviour speaks in another Case) *neither will ye believe tho' One rose from the Dead.* Luke 16. 31. If so plain a Revelation of this Truth will not convince you, neither will you be convinc'd, tho' it were revealed to you from Heaven.

But you tell me, If all lawful Things may be enjoyn'd by Superiours in the Worship of God, then Spittle and Cream in Baptism, Crossing at the Eucharist, and abundance more of such Popish Trumpery, may be enjoined by them; which you endeavour to prove lawful.

Are you sure (Sir,) that 'tis lawful to clog the Institutions of Christ, with such needless, burdensome, and insignificant Things? Indeed, Decency and Order, and Edification require a few Ceremonies, and such as are expressive of Reverence, and help to promote the inward Piety and Devotion of the Mind; but does not the same Decency and Edification forbid too many, and such as are vain and unserviceable to those Ends? 'Tis certain, that the Worship of God cannot be perform'd without some Ceremonies;
and

and why may not Superiours make choice of such, as are recommended in Scripture, and approved of by the practice of ancient Times, for the greater Solemnity and Uniformity of Publick Worship, and must these be rejected, because they have not thought fit to burden it by requiring more? To let forth Religion in some necessary, comely, and significant Ceremonies, is to recommend and make her look fair and amiable in the Eyes of the World; but to dress her up in a multitude of garish and useless Habilliments, is to expose, and make her appear ridiculous to the Beholders.

But if these Things were lawful, which is much to be doubted, what need is there to fear the enjoining of those Things which the Church hath wisely cast out? If you look into the Preface before the Common-Prayer, you may see the Reasons why the Church thought fit to retain some of the ancient and decent Ceremonies, and to lay aside those frivolous and burdensome ones which you mention: And is it not a Vile Reflection on the Wisdom of our Superiours both in Church and State, to suspect the introducing of that, which upon prudent Consideration they have rejected? Especially, having given so good Reasons, for their so doing?

Besides, is it a fit pretence (think you) for not doing what is required, for fear of other and worse things being required upon the same grounds? This is (as a Reverend Prelate hath observed) as if a Son should refuse to put off his Hat at his Father's Command, lest he should be commanded to put off his Shoes, and be led on further to kiss his Toe, which is a Token of Respect somewhere; (or,) as if a Man should
refuse

refuse to wear the Badge or Habit of his Office or Degree, for fear he should be required to wear a Fool's-Coat. Every one can see the Folly of such Objections in these things, tho' too many are so blinded with Interest and Prejudice, as not to discern it in weightier Matters.

But *there are some things lawful* (say you) *that are too mean and trivial to be made the matter of a Command, as an Injunction to have our Eyes shut or open in time of Prayer, and the like.*

And must you not have mean and trivial Thoughts of Superiours, to suspect the injoining of these things, as if they had nothing to do but to trifle away their Time and Authority about such slight Matters? But I hope you do not reckon Forms of Prayer among those mean trivial things, which have been ever thought fit and necessary in all Christian Churches: And yet you are so vain, as to tell me in that Letter, *That Superiours would be more favourable to you in these Matters, if they were not hinder'd by others, who obstruct all their Designs of Peace and Concord.* As if they themselves did not consider what they did, but were meerly led on and acted by others, and would gladly undo, what upon great Advice and Deliberation, they have thought fit to be done, if they were but left to themselves: Yea, though in establishing of Forms, they have acted in Conformity to all Antiquity, yet there can be no Peace or Concord till they lay them aside, and do as you would have them. What think you, is not this arrant Pride and Hypocrisie, thus to magnifie your selves, and to seek by a few fulsome Flatteries to Atone for such vile Reflections?

But

But tho' *all things are lawful* (say you) yet *all things are not expedient*. And this will lead me to consider the Expediency of Forms of Prayer, which shall be done in my next. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

August 9th, Your Unfeigned Well-wisher,
1697.

M. H.

L E T T E R III.

S I R,

I Shew'd in my last, our Agreement about the Lawfulness of Forms of Prayer, and the Obligation that thence lies upon us to join in the use of them, for the Maintenance of Peace and Unity.

2^{dly}. I come now to consider the Expediency of them, and to see how far we agree here, the better to adjust the Matters in difference between us. For the Proof of this Expediency, I refer you to my 7th Letter, and likewise to my Sermon preach'd and publish'd for the Satisfaction of an eminent Dissenter, in which you will find this Matter handled and proved at large.

Indeed, 'tis to be hoped, That you are not so far from owning this Expediency, as some may imagine: For in your Letter of *July 5th*, you have these Words [*For the Lawfulness and*
Expe-

Expediency of Forms of Prayer, in some Cases and to some Persons, none of us do deny] This looks like a pretty hopeful Concession, and a farther Advance to an Accommodation; if the Straitness of the Limitations do not spoil all. Let us see then, what are the Cases, and who are the Persons, in respect of whom you grant the Expediency or Inexpediency of Forms?

And these (as far as I can guess by your Letters) relate partly to the difference of Times; and partly to the difference of Mens Abilities.

1. First then, for the difference of Times, you tell me in your first Letter, That *you ever thought the Liturgy an excellent Work for the Time in which it was Composed; but you believe that the Compilers of it never dreamt of Posterities being confin'd to it, and the Ministers of future Generations being obliged to use that and no other in their publick Ministration.*

But why should you believe so? Did not those pious and excellent Persons live in the constant Use, and die in the Defence of the Liturgy? Yea, we read of some who laid it next their Hearts, and hugg'd it in the very Flames. And did they ever dream (think you) that such a reform'd and deliberate Composure should be laid aside to make way for *Extempore-Prayer*? They did not make a New Liturgy, but reformed the Old, and only purg'd it from the corrupt Additions and Innovations of Popery. And why should you believe that Men so little given to Change, should be so willing to part with such a wise and well-ordered Establishment? Or, that they ever dreamt of a sort of double Refiners that should refine again upon them, and reform it all away?

This is a precarious Conjecture, and taken up without any colour of Reason; especially since all their learned Successors have ever since as much

reverenc'd and kept to it, as the first Compilers.

But you take Forms of Prayer to be expedient only in Times of Darkneſs and Ignorance, and believe they were never calculated for Times of greater Light.

But (Sir,) were there ever Times of greater Light, than the Days of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, when Life and Immortality were brought to light by the Goſpel, and Error, and Ignorance vaniſh'd like Darkneſs at the Approach of the Sun? And yet we find Forms of Prayer preſcribed and uſed in thoſe bright and glorious Times: For, did not *John* the Baptiſt, who was a burning and ſhining Light, teach his Diſciples to pray by a Form? If you have any doubt of this, you will find it proved by Dr. *Lightfoot* beyond all Contradiſtion. And that Chriſt himſelf, who was the great Light of the World, taught his Diſciples a Form, is too plain in ſacred Writ to be called in Queſtion. And was this done (think you) to keep Men in Darkneſs, or to help them out of it?

If we go on to the following Ages; When were there greater Lights ſet up in the Chriſtian Church, than in the Days of *St. Cyprian*, *St. Chryſoſtom*, *St. Baſil*, *St. Ambroſe*, *St. Auſtin*, &c.? And yet all theſe were either Compoſers of Liturgies themſelves, for the uſe of their ſeveral Churches, or Approvers and Uſers of ſuch as were compoſed by others. And will you reckon the pious Compoſures of theſe great Lights, among the Works of Darkneſs? -- To come down to the Times of the Reformation, When did there appear greater Lights in the Horizon of the *Engliſh* Church, than *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, and the other Compilers of our Liturgy? And what admirable Wiſdom, Piety and Moderation

tion, have they shewed in the compiling of it, which make it a Work little less than Divine; and, next to the Inspired Writings, hath nothing extant in the Christian World to exceed or equal it? And is it expedient (think you) that this should give place to the present and hasty Conceptions of every empty Brain? But

(2.) *Secondly*, You limit the Expediency of Forms not only by the difference of Times, but by the difference of Mens Abilities. And this you are so full of, that you vent it almost in every Letter, frequently vaunting of yours and some others mighty Talent, and great Abilities of expressing themselves fitly to God in Prayer, without Forms. But (Sir,) were not those eminent and learned Persons before-mentioned, who compos'd and us'd Forms of Prayer, Men of far greater Parts and Abilities than such as now vainly pretend to be above them? Can every conceited Holder-forth (think you) pray better than *St. Cyprian*, *St. Chrysostom*, and other Ancient Fathers, who were famed for their Eloquence and great Abilities, and yet thought fit to use Forms in their publick Ministrations? Yea, do not the most able and learned Men, in the present as well as former Ages, celebrate the publick Worship by Forms, whose Abilities are well known to be much greater than theirs, who think they have no need of them?

Besides (Sir,) 'tis a Mistake to think, that any such great Abilities are requisite to this *extempore* way of praying: A great deal of Confidence with very slender Abilities, is sufficient to do the Feat: Your self tell me (in your 2d Letter) that you know a great many who have this Gift of expressing themselves fluently this way, that have no Gift of Elocution or Readiness of Speech upon any other Occasion.

The Truth is, *Extempore-Prayer* when 'tis best and most dextrously perform'd; requires no more than a heated Fancy, a bold Front, and a voluble Tongue; and therefore an ingenious Author hath told us, That it deserves much the same Commendation that is due to *Extempore-Verses*; only with this difference, that there is necessary to these latter, a competent Measure of Wit and Learning; whereas the former may be done with very little Wit and no Learning at all. So that the Expediency of Forms of Prayer, which you own in the general, is but little weakned by your unwarrantable Restrictions. For if they were found expedient in Times of greatest Light; and if Men of the greatest Parts and Abilities have thought it fit and necessary to use them, certainly such as only talk of great Light, and are vainly conceited of much less Abilities, must have the greatest need of them.

But let us see, upon what this Expediency of Forms of Prayer is grounded, and that may help us to see more clearly into the Weakness and Vanity of the aforesaid Limitations.

And (1st,) the wise Man finds it, on the distance that is between God and us, willing us [*Not to be rash with our mouth, or hasty to utter any thing before God, because he is in Heaven, and we upon Earth, Eccles. v. 2.*] shewing that the Reverence we owe to our Maker, arising from the Sense of our Infinite distance from him, forbids us to bespeak him in a hasty, loose, and careless manner: Now, this will serve for all Times and Persons, none being ever allowed to vent any thing rashly or hastily before him.

(2dly,) The utter Inability of the best of us to perform the Duty of Prayer so well, by present and sudden Conceptions, as by well-consider'd

sider'd and digested Forms, is another ground of the Expediency of them ; and this makes it necessary, for all Persons in all Times and Occasions: The Disciples of Christ were sensible of this, and therefore begg'd our Saviour to teach them to pray : Who thereupon assisted them with a Form: And of this the many Indecencies and Imperfections of those that practise otherwise, may abundantly convince us.

(3dly,) *Thirdly*, Your great Friend and Father Mr. *John Calvin* hath laid down the Expediency of Forms of Prayer, and other Ecclesiastical Rites, upon such firm Grounds as will last to all Ages; and shew the perpetual Use and Necessity of them: For in his Epistle to the Lord Protector, he amply declares his Appro- Calvin's Epist.
87. bation of them, and would have them so determined, that it might not be lawful for Ministers in their Administrations, to vary from them ; and that for these Reasons, partly to be a help to the Weakness of some, who cannot well perform their Duty without them ; partly to put a stop to the desultorious Levity of others, who affect too much, New things ; and partly likewise to be a Testimony of the Church's Consent in Doctrine and Worship, to future Ages: Now all, or some of these things will make Forms of Prayer necessary and expedient at All Times, and for All Persons: And consequently, the Expediency of them, may be asserted and established without your frivolous and groundless Limitations.

And thus having shewn how far we are agreed, about the Lawfulness and Expediency of Forms of Prayer ; and likewise, having endeavoured to remove the little Exceptions which are wont to create some small difference in both, my next

Business must be to consider, what you offer against the Injunction of them for publick Worship. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

August 12th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

LETTER IV.

S I R,

WE have seen how far we are agreed about the Lawfulness and Expediency of Forms of Prayer: In both which, the difference between us when well consider'd, is found so small; that an honest and humble Mind may easily yield it, to the Wisdom and Authority of Superiours, for the sake of Peace. And that you may be the better perswaded to this, let us go on to consider what is further said concerning the Injunction of Forms; to see how we accord here, that we may the better remove the Mistakes and Differences that have been raised about it.

And here you tell me, more than once (in your Letter of *June* the 28th) that you are not against all imposing of Forms, upon some Persons, and in some Cases. Now this, for ought we know, may prove a pretty comfortable Concession: For it does not utterly disclaim all Power in Superiours of ordering and settling these Matters: And therefore, let us here again inquire, Who are the

the Persons? And what are the Conditions upon which these things may, or may not be imposed?

1. And first, for the Persons, you tell me, that Forms may be imposed on such as have not the Gift of Prayer; by which you mean, such a Readiness of Speech as to be able to pray without them. This is something, and I'm glad to find, that you grant Forms of Prayer necessary to help the Infirmities, and to secure the Reverence of publick Worship, from the Imperfections of such Men. But how shall we distinguish these weak and insufficient Men from others? For many ignorant and unskilful Persons are very Opinionative, and apt to think, they can pray as well as the best; and many times those are most forward to this Exercise, who are least able to perform it. For do not some suffer their Tongues to run this way without Fear or Wit, to the great Scandal of Religion and Profanation of God's Name; who yet are as impatient of Restraint as any; and expect the same Liberty? And how can this Difficulty be remov'd without a general Injunction? But the Persons on whom you would not have Forms impos'd, are such as have this Gift of Prayer; and are (as you say) eminently qualified to pray without them.

But pray (Sir,) consider, Are not the best and ablest Men liable to many Infirmities, and Imperfections that may marr the Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worship? Are they not subject to many Distractions of Mind, and Failures of Memory? May they not be disturbed with Passions, or incumbred with Cares, with many other Accidents that may disorder their Thoughts, and hinder the Fruitfulness of their Invention? And do not even the best of Men stand in need of Forms

of Prayer, to prevent the bad Effects and Inconveniencies arising from these things? Is not the Tongue a slippery and unruly Member, when let loose? And apt to run into many Indecencies, and to let fall many unbecoming Expressions before we are aware? This, some of the wisest among you have acknowledged. And is it not much better to tie it up to a Form of sound Words, than hazard the venting so many rash and indigested Ones?

But 'tis well known (say you) *That there are many among us, both Ministers and People, who have an Ability of fitly expressing their Minds unto God in Prayer*; and tho' the Tongue may a little slip and falter now and then, yet why should they be tied up to Forms always, for a few Failings that happen but seldom?

But (Sir,) does it not become the Wisdom and Authority of the Church, to provide as much as possible against all such Accidents? That which happens sometimes, may happen often, especially when the Nature of the thing so easily leads to it: And must not the Worship of God be secured at all times against such Indecencies? Besides, Is it possible (think you) for any to express themselves so fitly upon present Conceptions, as they may upon second Thoughts and more mature Deliberation? Can there be that Fulness and Comprehensiveness of Matter, that Comeliness of Order and Method, that Decency and Fitness of Expression in an *Ex-tempore* Prayer, as may be in premeditated and well-digested Forms? And (you know) 'tis but reason that God should have the best. Moreover, 'tis not so much a Man's expressing his own Mind, that is the Business of publick Prayer, but his expressing the Minds of others; yea, of the whole Congregation: For the Minister is not to present
unto

unto God, only his own private Wants and Desires, but the common Needs and Desires of the People, and the Joint-Devotions of the whole Church: And this will require more than present and sudden Thoughts, to order and offer them up as we ought: So that, these things considered, your first Restriction of enjoining Forms of Prayer upon some Persons only, is found to be both unreasonable and unpracticable.

(2.) Let us proceed then to your second Restriction, and see in what Cases, and upon what Terms, you allow an Injunction of publick Forms?

And here (tho' it be not so plainly laid down) yet we may guess a little at it, by your frequent and bitter Complaints, of Two hard Terms in the Injunction of the Liturgy (viz.) (1.) The one is, that it requires the Use of all that is prescribed in it (2.) The other is, That it requires the Use of that and no other. The Use.

Now where is the Hardship of these Terms? Would you have a Liturgy enjoin'd, without any Obligation of using or keeping to it? Or would you have a Liberty granted to every one to alter, amend, or add to it at pleasure? It seems then you can comply with the enjoining a Liturgy, provided that you are not requir'd to use all that is contain'd in it, and that you may use any other thing besides it. (That is, in effect) If you may lay aside what you think fit, and add to it what you please. And would not this be an admirable Injunction (think you?) But let us examine a little further into this Matter.

1. First then you complain, *That you are required to use all and every thing contained in, and prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer.* (Sir,) if you would use so much of it as you well may, and are satisfied

fied in, this might look like something better than a bare Pretence; and that would bring you on to see the Soundness and Reasonableness of the rest: But since you lay aside All, and prefer your present Conceptions before any part of it, 'tis manifest, that 'tis but an empty Cavil, if not a downright Falsification. And yet to shew your great Tenderness, I find you talking much (in your Letter of *June 30th*) of some Mens brawny Consciences, and the Wideness of their Throats that can swallow All, with the Straitness of your own, that cannot let down so much. But (Sir,) do not some [strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel?] (*i. e.*) start at an innocent Ceremony or well-composed Form, and at the same time swallow Schism, Division, Disobedience, with many other crying Enormities?

Again, I find you complaining (in your Letter of *June 28th*) *That you cannot pick and chuse, and use what you think fit, and refuse the rest, but must (as Travellers on the Kings Highway) keep the Road, and not break out of it, to escape any foul way.* (Sir,) there are some Creatures so apt to wander, that 'tis hard to keep them in the right Way; tho' it be much more safe to keep in the ancient Liege-way, than to break out of it. And if you meet with no worse Passages in the publick Roads, than in the publick Prayers, you will have little Cause to complain either of foul or rough Ways. But is it fit (think you) for Men to pick and chuse out of publick Orders and Establishments, to obey what they please, and refuse the rest? Is not this to let loose the Reins, and suffer every one to do only what is right in his own Eyes? Is it not strange that any should own or vent such wild Principles of Confusion?

2dly, Secondly, The other hard Term you complain of in the Injunction of the Liturgy, is, your being commanded to use That and no other. And where's the Hardship of this? Would you have the Liturgy enjoin'd, and the use of another thing set up by its side? How can this consist with any Order, or indeed with common Sense? Or would you have the Liturgy enjoin'd, and the use of it left free? This would be to enjoin, and not enjoin it, at the same time; and can any Establishment stand upon such a precarious and inconsistent Bottom? If a Liturgy, containing all the daily and constant Matter of Prayer and Praises, together with all the standing Offices of Religion, be enjoin'd, and no other; it thereby becomes necessary to be used, and excludes the use of any other. And if it be so full, as to comprehend all that is needful to those ends, what need is there of any other? Unless you think it necessary to ask the same things every Day in new and varied Expressions: Which can't with any colour of Reason be affirmed.

Besides, the Liturgy of the Church, is not so strictly enjoin'd, as never to permit the use of any other: For in your private and secret Devotion, you are at liberty to use your free, or compos'd Prayers: And in publick too, upon any new Occasion or Emergency, other Prayers appointed by Authority, are and ought to be used. But for the ordinary and standing Offices of publick Worship, as there is no Occasion, so there is no need of any other.

Lastly, for the further clearing of this Matter, let us see the Grounds and Reasons of this Injunction: And if that make it necessary for all Persons and Occasions; you will easily see the weakness both of your Complaints and Objections against it.

Now

Now the great Reason of enjoining publick Forms, is, as sundry Acts of Parliament declare, the Uniformity of publick Worship; whereby alone, one regular and uniform way of serving God, may be preserv'd among all the Members of a National Church. And this makes it necessary for all Persons, Places and Countries, who (according to the Apostle's Direction) desire [*With one mind and one mouth to glorifie their great Creator.*] But I find you with another Brother of yours, often styling this, *That pitiful thing call'd Uniformity, that never enter'd into the Mind of God or his Son to command.* It seems, you can agree well enough in a Form of Railing, tho' not of Devotion. But is Uniformity such a Pitiful thing, which alone can help us to speak the same things, and to agree in our Petitions, which our Saviour hath made necessary to the Success of our Prayers? Is that to be so undervalued, that wise and knowing Men have so highly prized in all Ages? And will you call that a Pitiful thing, which puts such a Form and Comeliness into Religious Worship, as to render it more prevalent with God, and more pleasing in the Eyes of Men? Hath not the Wisdom and Piety of our Governors thought fit to establish an Uniformity, ever since the Reformation? And have they employed all this Time, and Care, and Prudence, about a Pitiful thing? Is not this a vile Reflection on our Superiors in Church and State? Can there be an Instance of greater Pride, and vain Conceit that some have of themselves? (In a word) does not this plainly shew, that Arrogance and Obstinacy, are the great Vertues and Perfections of our Dissenting Brethren?

But, an Unity (say you) in the Matter of Prayer, is sufficient, without any such Uniformity in Words and Syllables.

Syllables. But (Sir,) sad Experience (which is the best Argument) hath taught us, That when the Unity of Forms was by a prevailing Faction, laid aside, the Unity of the Matter of Prayer, soon went with it. For Men fell a praying one against another: And when the Pales of the Church were taken away, the grossest Blasphemies in point of Doctrine, as well as the greatest Divisions in point of Worship, immediately broke in upon us: The Enemy taking Opportunity to sow those Tares that can't be rooted out to this Day. This hath been acknowledged and lamented, by some sober Presbyterians themselves, particularly by Dr. *Tuckney*, in his Sermon on 2 *Tim.* i. 13. and Mr. *Edwards*, in his *Gangrena*: To which I refer you.

Thus I have shewn you, how far we agree about the enjoining Forms of Prayer: And have endeavoured to carry you further; by making you sensible of your Mistake, where you differ. But to take off the Force of all this, I find you questioning the Authority that commands these Things, which must be examin'd in my next. I am

S I R,

August 14th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

LET-

L E T T E R V.

S I R,

I Have been comprizing the Difference between us, about the Injunction of Forms ; by shewing the reasonableness of enjoyning them on all Persons and Occasions for Publick Worship : And likewise how fit it is, that all the Members of a National Church, for the sake of Peace, Order and Uniformity, should join in the use of them and no other. But because you have some Exception against the Authority that thus imposes them, I must endeavour to remove or adjust that Matter : For in yours of June 28th, you would have me tell you, *Whom we mean by Superiors : And who, or what those Rulers are, that Christ hath vested with such a vast Authority, as to command an Invariable Form ; and the rather (you say) because we are divided in this point among our selves ; One part of the Disputers for the Church of England, making the King the External Civil Governour ; but the Bishops the Internal Governours of the Church, as a Church, &c.*

Sir, I know none of the Regular Sons of the Church of *England* divided in this Point : And I hope to shew from the Concessions of the most eminent Presbyterians, that the Difference between them and us in this Matter, is not so great, as is imagined. To this end, let us see what Power is lodg'd in the Civil Magistrate, about Sacred and Spiritual Things : And what is peculiar to those Spiritual Officers and Ministers, which Christ hath appointed in his Church ; and by that means you will see plainly, who are those Rulers

lers and Superiors, that may command in these Things.

1. First, There is a Power in the Church that is purely Spiritual: Such is, That of Preaching the Word, Administring the Holy Sacraments, the Power of Absolution, Ordination, Confirmation, Excommunication, and the like. This is the Power of the Keys, committed by Christ to the Apostles, and in them, to their Successors, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church. And this Commission is peculiarly directed and confin'd to them; No Civil Magistrate having Authority of doing any of these Things: For when *Uzziah* the King would venture upon the Execution of the Priest's Office, we read that it was said to him [*It pertaineth not to thee, Uzziah, to burn Incense unto the Lord, but to the Priests of the Sons of Aaron, who are Consecrated to burn Incense.*] 1 Chron. 26. 18. Herein (I suppose) we are all agreed, and I know of none but *Erasmus*, that affirmed the contrary, who (I think) hath few or no Followers.

2. Secondly, There is an External Political Power of Protecting, Ordering, and Well-governing the Church; and this is the Power of the Sword, which is committed to the Civil Magistrate only; who is therefore said to be [*The Minister of God to us for Good, and an Avenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil.*] Rom. 13. 4. And as King *Uzziah* was blam'd for meddling with the Power of the Keys, so was *Peter* check'd for drawing the Sword; and commanded to put it up, as a Weapon that appertain'd not to him, *Matt.* 26. 52. These are two distinct Powers, the one appointed to work upon the Inward; the other upon the Outward Man; and both ordain'd by Christ, for the edifying and well-ordering of his Church. As for the Ministers Power, *In Spiritualibus*, (or) the due

due Exercise of the Sacred Function, there is no Dispute: But the Magistrate's Power, *Circa Spiritualia*, (i. e.) Whether it extends to Ecclesiastical Persons and Causes? is the Knot to be untied. For the clearing whereof, I must shew, wherein the Civil Magistrate's Power in Church-matters, doth mainly consist; that we may see, how we agree about it.

1. And (First,) The Prince or Civil Magistrate, hath a Power of protecting and defending the Church, and every Member of it, in the profession and practice of true Religion. For this end, chiefly, was the Sword put into his Hand; which he is therefore requir'd [*Not to bear in vain,*] Rom. 13. 3, 4. but to draw it forth, to the Terror of Evil-doers, and the defence of them that do well. 1 Pet. 2. 14. 'Tis the Magistrate's Province and Duty, to maintain the Church in its Rights; and to preserve it in that fulness of Power and Privileges, which Christ hath Communicated to it: Hence Kings are stil'd [*Nursing Fathers, and Queens Nursing Mothers*] to the Church: *Isai.* 49. 23. And we are bid to pray for them, that under their power and protection, [*We may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.*] 1 Tim. 1, 2. v. This is granted on all Hands,

2. Secondly, The Prince hath a Power of regulating and well-ordering Matters appertaining to the Church. (As) keeping Ecclesiastical Persons to their respective
 2 Chron. 29. 5, 24. Offices and Duties; preserving the Places of Publick Worship from Sacrilege and Profanation; Establishing a Regular and Uniform way of Divine Service to be observed
 2 Chron. 31. 4. in them; providing and securing a convenient Maintenance to such as serve at the Altar: He may reform the Church when it is
 corrupted

corrupted in its Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline: These things we find 1 Tim. 5. 17. practis'd and commended in all the good Kings both of *Israel* and *Judah*: Who took care to remove the Impediments, and encourage the exercise of true Religion. Again, Princes may and ought, as Vice-roys of Christ's Kingdom, to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church; by suppressing Schism, and purging it from Idolatry and Superstition: To this end, they may guard it with good Laws; and may likewise convene the Ecclesiastical Governors to meet in Synods and Convocations, to consult and agree upon such Canons, as the Necessities of the Church shall require. And because the Power of the Church is wholly Spiritual, and some bold Obstinate Persons may despise and slight the Censures of the Church, which may thereby be render'd ineffectual; therefore,

3dly. Thirdly, The Prince may and ought to ratifie and enforce such wholesome Laws, by Temporal Sanctions and Penalties, thereby correcting such Disorderly Members, and punishing the Breach and Contempt of Ecclesiastical Canons and Constitutions. This we find was the practice of Christian Kings and Emperors ever since they became Christian: For, when the Church was either corrupted by Error, or infested by Schism, they interposed their Power to put a Check to such Disorders; and partly by their own imperial Edicts, and partly by the Canons of Councils call'd by their Authority, and enforc'd by Civil Coercions, put a stop to the spread and increase of them. And this is no more than what is necessary, for the peace and good Government of the Church: For tho' the Spiritual Rod of Excommunication, hath indeed Terror enough in it, to be dreaded of

D

All,

All, that have any sense or care of their Souls, yet because too many are so harden'd in their Schism and Errors, as not to feel the smart of it, " The " Secular Prince may and ought, to second the " Spiritual with the Temporal Rod ; to awe such " Offenders with Corporal Corrections, as are " fearless and insensible of the Censures of the " Church. (In a word) because All things in the Church of Christ, are required to be done Decently and in Order, therefore Kings and

1 Cor. 14.

Princes who are the Guardians and Protectors of the Church, are to take care of the Decency and Solemnity of the publick Worship perform'd in it: To effect which, they have not only a Directive and Mandatory Power to make Laws and give Rules about it, but likewise a Coactive and Compulsory Power to make them observ'd: Without which, they can never attain their End All this is granted, by the most

Eminent Presbyterians, in their *Jus Jus Div. c. 9. Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*. And the same is acknowledg'd likewise by Plea for Peace, p. 30, Mr. Baxter, both in his Plea for Peace, 99. and Treatise of Episcopacy.

Episc. p. 144, 192, 193.

Now these Concessions are abundantly enough for our purpose: For, if Publick Forms of Prayer, have the Authority of Ecclesiastical Governours in Convocation, and be likewise ratified and enforc'd by the Sanctions of the Civil Power, there can be no just exception against the Authority that enjoyns them. And you may be satisfied from hence, who those Superiors and Rulers are, that may command an invariable Form, which was the thing you question'd; and (I hope) is now to your Satisfaction answer'd. So that, if there be no unlawfulness in Forms of Prayer, which you have already granted, you

you may easily see a strong Obligation lying upon you, to use those that are commanded, and no other ; which was the thing to be proved.

But you ask, *What if the King should command one Translation, Version, or Form of Prayers, and the Bishops another, whom must we obey?*

(Sir,) This in our Case, is a meer Cavil, because all Authority both Civil and Ecclesiastical agree in the prescribed Forms: And we hope they will never Clash or interfere in that or any other thing for the publick good of Church or State. But if it should so happen, (which God forbid) You must know, " That tho' Christ erected a standing Form " of Spiritual Government in his Church, yet he " never gave any Authority to Ecclesiastical Per- " sons, to controul the commanding Power of " Princes, in lawful and indifferent Matters: But left all such things intirely to their Disposal and Determination And we never read, That the Apostles or Primitive Christians ever claim'd such a Power, or suffer'd for disobeying in such Things.

There is but one Limitation assign'd of our Obedience, and that is [*To obey God rather than Man.*] If the Commands of God and the Prince clash and contradict each other, there the Prince hath no Right to be obey'd, because his Will is countermanded by a Superiour Authority. And therefore we find Christ and his Apostles, who were very tender of giving the least Offence to Secular Powers, in lawful and indifferent Things, would yet yield no Obedience in things forbidden by the Express Will of God. This is evident in Matters between God and the King: And 'tis no less so, in the Case between the King and his Subjects; where, if the Spiritual Power of the one, clash with the Temporal Power of the other, 'tis mani-

fest which must yield ; the Inferiour Power being to give place to the Higher Powers : For *St. Peter* styles Kings and Emperors, Supream in their Dominions : And a Supream (you know) can have no Superiour Power upon Earth to controul or over-rule him.

But tho' the King (say some) be Supream in Temporal Affairs, yet there may be and is, a Superiour Power to him in Church-matters.

This is the Power that is claim'd and usurp'd by the Pope, over Christian Kings and Emperors. And there are others who are great Enemies to the Pope, that put in their Claim to the same Power in these Matters ; and would fain take it out of his Hands, to put it into their own. But *St. Peter*, (from whom the first claim as his Successors,) expressly asserts Kings to be Supream in their Dominions ; without Limitation or Exception of Spiritual Matters. And what Authority have any to except, where the Spirit of God makes no Exception ? And our Saviour Christ, (from whom the latter claim) hath no where limited or circumscrib'd the Sovereign Power of Princes in these Things. So that, Kings had need look well to the Rights of their Crown, to preserve them from the unjust Pretensions and Encroachments of both.

Besides, what mad work must two Co-ordinate Supremacies make in the same Kingdom ? For since Sacred and Civil Matters are many times so closely twisted and inter-woven together, that they can hardly be separated or distinguish'd, what sharp and unavoidable Contests, must frequently arise about them ? And if these two Rival Supreams differ about the extent and limits of their Power, what shall the Subject do, who cannot possibly obey or please both ? For, since no Man can serve two Masters,

Masters, the serving of the One, will be the despising of the Other; which may draw on him the Displeasure of both. And can it be conceived, that the Great Sovereign of the World, who hath styl'd himself, A God of Order, and not of Confusion, should lay such a Stumbling-block in our way; and leave so weighty a Matter, upon which the Peace and Welfare of Kingdoms depend, to such great Uncertainties? Again, if these two Rival-powers fall at variance, who shall reconcile them, or what shall decide this great Controversie? Why, nothing upon Earth is able to do it, but the Sword; with which the Spiritual Power hath nothing to do, for that hath no other Weapons but the Censures of the Church, and can only strike with the Thunder of Excommunication; and if these be dis-regarded, as they too often are, it hath nothing left to preserve or maintain a Supremacy. So that, if the Sword be the only Weapon to defend it, he who is of right intrusted with that, is thereby design'd and constituted Supreme.

But those Scriptures (you say) that require Obedience and Subjection to the Higher Powers, respect Church-governours 300 Years before the Christian Magistrate appeared in the World.

(Sir,) If you consult Expositors, or the History of those Times, you will find those Scriptures to respect the *Roman* Governors, who then sway'd the Imperial Sceptre; To whom, our Saviour would have all due Submission and Obedience paid: For he commanded [*To render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;*] He acknowledg'd *Pilate's* Power to be given him from above. And the Apostles and Primitive Christians demean'd themselves towards them accordingly. Indeed, for the first 300 Years after Christ, when the *Roman* Power not only

persecuted but sought to root out Christianity, the Church was govern'd by its own Laws; and by its own Legislative Power, provided the best it could, for its own Safety and Edification; but when the *Roman* Emperors embrac'd Christianity, to the great Joy of the Christian World, they took the Church into their Care and Protection; which by that means, got out of that heavy Storm of Persecution, under which it had long labour'd; and began to flourish in Peace and Prosperity. For *Constantine* and other Christian Emperors, built Churches for publick Worship, and provided for the decent Celebration of it: They conven'd General Councils, and often presided in them, ratifying their Canons with their Imperial Edicts, and enforcing them with Temporal Sanctions and Penalties: By which means, the Church is derived down in that happy and flourishing State, in which it now continues.

Thus (Sir,) you see, who those Rulers and Superiors are, that may enjoin an Invariable Form. And I hope, I have in some measure satisfy'd your Demands, and remov'd your Exceptions against the Authority that enjoins them.

But when you have nothing to say against the Authority of Superiors, you are wont to complain of the Injustice and Severity of their Laws, and to cry out of Persecution, when you suffer for the Breach of them; how justly this is done, must be examin'd in the next. I am

S I R,

August 10th, Yours to serve you,
1697.

M. H.

L E T-

L E T T E R VI.

S I R,

I Shew'd in my Last, what that Authority is, that lawfully may, and hath enjoin'd Forms of Prayer, together with the Equity and Obligation of those Laws, that require them.

My next Task must be, to inquire into the Reasonableness and Justice of those Penalties, that are annex't to the Violation of them: And this must be the rather done, because I find you talking much of Goals and Imprisonments, and other Hardships, which you have endur'd upon the account of them: You complain most bitterly and frequently of Persecution, as if you lived under *Nero*, or *Dioclesian*, and felt all the Tortures that were inflicted on the Primitive Christians, and that for the same or as good a Cause too; All which is done, merely to derive an Odium upon the Laws and Lawgivers, and to procure the greater Pity and Liberty for your selves:

And here I must observe a double Artifice, which I find you making use of, the one to evade the Duty, the other the Penalty of these Laws. To effect the

First, you are wont to call the Injunctions of Superiors not by the Style of Laws or Statutes, which are Terms, that denote and challenge Obedience, but by the odious Name of Impositions, that is apt to beget a Dislike and Abhorrence of them: For though Men are willing to be rul'd and directed, yet they hate to be impos'd upon; and therefore to weaken the Power of the Magistrate, he shall not be term'd a Lawgiver but an

Impofer, and his Ordinances not Laws but Impositions, that by giving them a bad Name, you may the better fet them aside at pleasure

But if that will not do, you have another Artifice, to escape the Punishments of them, and that is by fixing on them the hateful Name of Persecution; a Term apt to denote more of Cruelty in the Inflictors, than of Guilt in the Sufferers.

Now, to detect the Fallacy and Falshood of these Arts, 'twill be necessary to consider the Punishments you thus complain of, together with the Reason and Authority upon which they are grounded, that you may the better discern between just Punishments, and unjust Persecution: And this I shall do, as Matters stand, before these Penalties were suspended, that all Men may see the Injustice of such Clamours.

What then are the Punishments annex'd to the Laws, that do establish Conformity to the Church? Why!

These are both Ecclesiastical and Civil: Of the First sort, are the Ecclesiastical Censures of Admonition, Suspension, Deprivation, and Excommunication, which are inflicted by the Authority of the Church, for the Correction and Amendment of Offenders: This is the Power of the Keys committed to the Church by Christ himself, whereby he hath given Authority to the Bishops and Pastors of Admitting into, and Excluding out of the Church, and thereby of opening and shutting the Kingdom of Heaven: Which Power or Commission is granted by our Saviour in these Words, *If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a Publican: Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven, Matt. xviii. 17, 18.*

Now

Now these Punishments being ordain'd and appointed by Christ himself, cannot be styl'd Persecution, or made any just matter of Complaint when duly inflicted on Offenders. But

These things (say some) have been ill manag'd, especially Excommunication, that great Punishment, being made too cheap and common; for many have been Excommunicated for Trifles and turn'd out of the Church, for what no Man would be turn'd out of Doors. But

Sir, Is Obstinacy and wilful Disobedience to the Church to be reckoned a Trifle? And yet this is still the chief, if not the only Cause of Excommunication. He that hearkens to the Church, and submits to the Authority of it, is not to be put out of it, but he that will not, is by our Saviour's Rule, to be accounted no better than a *heathen man, and a Pub. can*: Neither doth the Smallness of the thing extenuate, but rather aggravate the Fault; for the less the Matter of the Command is, the greater is the Disobedience; he that will disobey in a small thing, will sooner do it in a greater: And the Reverence of Authority is so tender a Matter, and of so great Moment, that it must not be despis'd in either; *For he that heareth you (saith Christ) heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*, Luke x. 16. You know, God Almighty punished the whole Race of Mankind for our first Parents tasting the forbidden Fruit, which one would think, was a small Fault for so great a Punishment, and yet considering the Ingratitude, the Stubborness and Disobedience involved in it, 'twas a crying Enormity, and justly deserved that Vengeance that was inflicted: I shall leave you to apply it, and proceed,

2dly, To the Civil Punishments annexed to the Violation of these Laws; and these are so easie and

and gentle, that none have any need to cry out of Persecution, or to brand the Magistrate for a Tyrant or Persecutor in inflicting of them : For is not Twelve-pence a *Sunday* a moderate Fine for absenting from the publick Assemblies? And nothing but Mens own Wilfulness and Obstinacy can draw upon them the higher Fines, or the Penalty of Imprisonment, which were thought necessary to awaken and reform some stubborn Offenders.

Our Laws have no Capital or Sanguinary Punishments in Matters of Religion, nor do they allow any to be put to Death, or to be cruelly tormented for them, but only by moderate Penalties compell them to hear Instruction, and to hinder them from propagating their Errors and Divisions to the Disturbance of the Peace of the Church and State. And yet you make as loud Outcries and Complaints of Persecution for these things, as if with some of the Ancient Martyrs you were to be broke upon the Wheel, and with *St. Lawrence* to be roasted upon the Gridiron.

But let us see the Difference between Legal Punishments and Persecution, these must be carefully distinguished ; for else the Thief and Murderer, and all other Offenders, may cry out of Persecution for suffering the just Punishments of their Crimes.

In Persecution then Two things are to be considered, *viz.* the Cause and the Measure of their Sufferings. For to suffer without a Cause, and to be punished for the Breach of a Law, which neither hath nor can be prov'd, is a sort of Persecution; and such likewise is that, where the Punishment exceeds the Design of the Law, or the Demerit of the Crime.

But

But the proper Notion of Persecution is to suffer for a good Cause, that is, for Righteousness sake : To be brought before Magistrates, and hal'd away to Prisons and Death it self for the Name of Christ, and adhering to his Truth. This was the Case of the Apostles and Primitive Christians, who were therefore said to be persecuted. In this Case our Saviour's Direction was, *Either to fly where it might be, or patiently and chearfully to suffer, where it could not ;* so that my mentioning your Removal into Scotland, was no worse Advice than Christ gave to his own Apostles, that is, *If they were persecuted in one place, to flee to another ;* and if England were such a hot Furnace of Persecution, as you represent it, 'twas no bad Counsel to move into the more Northern and cooler Regions of Scotland, where the Temper of the Air and the Religion of the Climate may be the more agreeable with the due Temper of Dissenters : But this by the by.

'Tis the Cause then, and not the Suffering that makes the Martyr : In like manner, 'tis not the undergoing of Punishment, but the suffering for Christ, and for Righteousness sake, that makes the Persecution : *For what glory is it, saith St. Peter, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God, 1 Pet. ii. 20.* Now the Sufferings you complain of, are neither for Christ, nor for Righteousness sake ; for you may be as Righteous, and serve Christ as well, yea, I think much better within the Church, than out of it ; and to suffer for the Breach of good Laws, made for the Preservation of Peace and good Order in the Church of Christ, and to guard the Worship of God from the Rudeness and Irreverence of Sectaries and Schismatics, is
to

to suffer as an evil Doer, and the greatest Malefactors may as well complain of their Sufferings, as any other in such Cases: Such Sufferings can give none any Comfort here, nor intitle them to any Reward hereafter; yea, they are rather the Beginnings of Sorrows, and the Fore runners of future and far grater Punishments. Indeed the Impatience you betray under them, shews them to be founded on a bad Bottom, and that you do not expect from them the Crown of Martyrdom; for else you might with the Apostles rejoice in your Sufferings, and instead of complaining, thank God, that you are accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ; we find St. Paul was so far from being afraid or asham'd, that he gloried in the Cross, and when some lamented his hard Fate in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, he checked their Tears, and told them, *That he was ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus*, Acts xxi. 13.

Whereas your frequent Outcries and Complaints of Sufferings do betray your Guilt, and shew, That you can take no comfort in them; and to tell you truly, to suffer for a fond Adherence to *Extempore-Prayer*, shews only a Zeal without Knowledge, and he that loses his Livelyhood for an obstinate Refusal of wholesome Forms, does but fall a Sacrifice to his own Rashness and Folly.

But whilst you make such heavy Complaints of easie and just Punishments, design'd merely to preserve the publick Peace, and to reform your private Errors, you may do well to call to mind the far greater and more unjust Sufferings, that be-fel the Sons of the Church of *England* in the time of the great Rebellion, and that not for the Breach, but Observance of good Laws, and a firm Adherence to their Duty both to God and the King:
What.

What miserable Outrage and Violence was offer'd to their Persons? What Rapine, Plunder, Oppression, and Spoil was made of their Goods and Estates? And having nick-nam'd them, Malignants, there were no Cruelties too great to be executed upon them: 'Twere too long, and too sad a Story to relate the doleful Tragedies acted upon the Prince, Peers, and People, and how the Three Kingdoms groan'd under the direful Effects of an outrageous and intemperate Zeal.

But because you may read these things in sundry Authors, and particularly in a Book called *Anglia Ruina*, or *Mercurius Rusticus*, I shall add no more on this sad Subject, but shall refer you to them.

In short then, you will do well to consider the Cause of the Sufferings you complain of, and if it cannot stand the Tryal of Reason now, you may well think, it will much less bear the severer Tryal of the last Day; if they are found to be the just and necessary Penalties of good Laws, do not flatter your self with the Name or Reward of Persecution, but rather make a right use of them, by returning to your Duty both to God and the Church, that you may avoid unnecessary Troubles here, and far greater Dangers and Punishments hereafter.

But you have two or three Pleas more to shift off Obedience to good Laws, viz. a Judgment of Discretion or Plea of Conscience, the Plea of Moderation, and the Plea of Toleration, all which shall be consider'd in Order. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

Sept 11th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R VII.

S I R,

I Consider'd in my Last your Plea of Persecution, whereby you have endeavour'd to evade the just and necessary Punishments of wholesome Laws.

I come now to another Plea, by which you seek to cast off all Obedience to them, and that is your Judgment of Discretion, whereby you can very discreetly judge any thing to be unlawful, which you have no mind to obey: And this Judgment, though never so false, ill grounded, and erroneous, shall give you a Superseas, and justify your Disobedience to them; this is a Matter of that Consequence, that it ought to be well examin'd in order to the Peace of Church and State.

Let us see then where this Judgment of Discretion is lodg'd, and how 'tis managed in order to the compassing of this end.

To which purpose, pray consult your Letter of June the 23th, where you will find these Words: *I see you lodge the final Decision of what is lawful, decent, and expedient in these Matters, in the Breasts of Superiours*; Yes, Sir, in all things that are not apparently unlawful, indecent, and inexpedient; For since, some-body must have the determining of these things, I know not where this Power can be more safely lodg'd. But you go on, and say, Indeed if it be in a thing confess'd indifferent, the Judgment is readily allow'd to the Superiors; but if the Question be about lawful and unlawful, we must have a Judgment of Discretion allow'd us as to our Practice, &c. Where'tis obvious to observe,
how

how all Power of judging in the publick Affairs of Church and State, is wrested out of the hands of of the Superiors, and cunningly lodg'd in the Breasts of the People. For

First, a thing must be *confess'd* to be indifferent, before the Magistrate shall be allow'd to have any Judgment at all in it: Now Men that have any Interest to the contrary, will confess no more things to be indifferent, than they have a Mind to, as appears in the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, which tho' in their own Nature plainly indifferent, yet some Men cannot or will not think them so, because they do not think fit to observe them; yea, they have a farther fetch, if the Indifferency of them too plainly appear, and that is, that the imposing of them alters their Nature, and makes them necessary, and consequently unlawful, by which Artifice their Judgment of Discretion shall rob the Magistrate of all Judgment and Authority in indifferent things. Then

2dly, *If the Question* (say you) *be about lawful or unlawful, then every one must have a Judgment of Discretion allowed them of Course:* So that by this Device, the Magistrate is cut off from all Judgment of Discretion here too, and the final Decision of what is lawful, decent, and expedient, is wholly lodg'd in the Breast of the Subject; which is an excellent way to set them above their Superiors, and to shift off all Obedience to them:

Yea, this hath mounted you to that degree of Arrogance, as to question whether you have any Superiors in these Matters; for you ask in the fore-cited Letter, who those Superiors are, that have this Authority of enjoining Forms of Prayer? Whether it be the King or the Bishops? Sir,

There are none so blind as those that will not see; this pretended Ignorance of yours, is not so much

much in Favour to the King, from whom your Principles take away the Ecclesiastical Power, as Spleen to the Bishops, whom you would likewise deprive of it: You cannot tell where the Power lies, because you have no mind to obey it, else you might easily know, that tho' the Bishops and Priests have an Episcopal and Pastoral Office which they derive from Christ, yet they order and establish nothing about the publick Exercise of it without the Consent and Authority of the King, whom they own Supream in Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Matters; so that this Objection proceeds not from a real but affected Ignorance; and let the Power be where it will, if it meddle with the Convention, your Judgment of Discretion well manag'd, can take it out of the hands of both.

Thus you lodge all decisive Judgment about these things, in the Hands and Breasts of the People; and so they may, at their Discretion, sit in Judgment upon their Sovereign, and from cutting off his Power, may proceed to cut off his Head too, of which our unhappy Age hath afforded a Doleful and Tragical Instance; so that Princes had need to look well to this Judgment of Discretion, if they mean to secure either their Laws or their Lives.

Now to remedy these Evils, and to learn our Duty in these Matters, let us have Recourse to the Holy Scriptures, and there we are bid to *submit to the King as Supream, and to Governors as those that are sent by him*, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. where the Supremacy of the King, and the Subordination of inferior Governors to him is plainly asserted, which Supremacy makes the King the Fountain and Springhead of all Power in his Dominions, from whence all others derive it, and consequently the final Determination of publick Affairs must be thereby

thereby lodged in him: And therefore in the same place we are bid to submit to every Ordinance of Man, that is not contrary to any Ordinance of God. The Apostle's directions to know them that are over us in the Lord, wills us so to know them, as to look upon them as Gods Anointed and Vicegerents upon Earth, to reverence their Persons, and obey their Laws, being both stamp'd with a Divine Authority, and this will dispose us to pay a due Deference to their Judgments, and to yield a just Respect to their greater Wisdom.

This Lesson Christian Modesty it self teaches; for that wills us to have low and mean Thoughts of our selves, and to think others better and wiser than our selves, especially our Governors, who have far greater Advantages and Opportunities of knowing more than we can; and being so much above us in Place and Power, may be reasonably supposed to see farther into things, than our lower Station will admit of: And therefore 'twill become us to think soberly of our selves, to suspect our own Judgment, when it crosses theirs, and submit our private to the publick Wisdom.

But will not these (say you) make us turn Papists, and reduce us to a blind Obedience? No, far from it: For the Church of *Rome* suffers not its Followers to examine their Doctrins, or enquire into their Injunctions, but exacts an implicit Faith to the one, and a blind Obedience to the other: It stiles *Ignorance the Mother of Devotion*, and seeks by all means to keep People in it, locking up the Scriptures in an unknown Tongue, and keeping from them the Key of Knowledge: In a word, it makes them pin their Faith on the Priests Sleeves, and to put out their own Eyes, that they may see the better with his; whereas
E. the

the Church of *England* not only allows, but wills all Men to try the soundness of its Doctrine, and the lawfulness of its Commands by the Touchstone of God's Word: To that end, the Holy Scriptures are daily read and unfolded unto them; we care not how much Knowledge and Understanding our People have, so they be but Modest and Humble with it, willing to learn, and to pay a due regard and deference to their Teachers; that they do not oppose and disturb Government, by a too obstinate adhering to their own Judgment, but submit to the Wisdom and Authority of Superiors, being content that they should know more, and to be directed by them; without this no Government can stand, nor any Peace and Order be maintained: Neither is it so absurd (as some imagine) for the Common People in a great measure to trust their lawful Pastors and Masters in things wherein they are not so compleat Judges of themselves.

But they (say you) may justly challenge a Right to judge what is Sin, that are like to be condemned for it if they do sin.

This, Sir, will give all People a Right to make and judge of Laws, because they are to be punished for breaking them: But I think 'tis a much safer course for them to rely on the Wisdom of Superiors, than to trust too much to their own weaker Judgment in these Matters; for they are many times too ignorant to judge what is fit to be done or not done, as we may see in the case of Schism, or breach of Communion, which too many live in without any Sense of the Fault, or Remorse for it, and so are in danger of being condemned for a Sin which they will not judge to be so.

But

But Governors (say you) are not infallible, and general Counsels may err ; Very true ! But are not the Common People more liable and likely to err than they ? Hath not that been ever thought most credible and fittest to be hearkened to, which is approved by the best and wisest part of Mankind ?

And is it not most fit, That their Judgment should determine and over-rule the rest ? Does not *Solomon* tell us, That he that leans to his own Understanding, or which is all one, he that will trust to his own judgment of Discretion is a Fool ? And certainly, he must be extreamly wise in his own Conceit, that will set up his own Judgment above all that are above him, and think himself wiser than all the Wisdom of a Nation.

But you add, That Superiors, if the Determination of these Matters lodges in them, will never be in the wrong : And will the People (think you) if they have the Power, be always in the right ? Are not these much more prone to Errors and Mistakes than the others ? And is it not far more safe to trust the Judgment of wise, knowing, and able Persons, than to follow the rude, heady, and illiterate Vulgar ?

Upon the whole then, 'tis evidently the Duty of Subjects and Inferiors, not to lean too much to their own Judgment, much less to set it up against well establish'd Laws, to evade Obedience to them : A Parent you know, or Master will not suffer his Children or Servants to be govern'd by their own Discretion, but his, and when he commands any thing to be done, or left undone, will not allow him to dispute his Commands, or oppose their own Sense or Judgment as a Reason for their Disobedience. Now 'tis but to pay the same Duty and Respect to your Superiors in Church

and State, as you exact from your Inferiors, and then you will soon see the reasonableness of this Submission; for without this, Government would be Precarious, and Subjection Arbitrary, for every one that could not or would not see the reasonableness of Laws, would exempt themselves from all Obedience to them: By which means, all Humourfom, Proud, and Perverse People might controul and nose their Superiors, and cast off all Duty and Subjection to them: And what mad work would it make in Church and State, if no Laws were valid and binding, unless every scrupulous, peevish, or ignorant Person, should consent to, and approve of it?

But will not this (say you) require Obedience to Arian, Popish and Presbyterian Governors, when they happen to be uppermost? And in another place you tell me, that this Doctrin would have done special Service in Queen *Mary's* Days, and will bear a Man's Charges through all the Turks Dominions. Sir, in what Country or under what Governors soever we shall happen to live, we are oblig'd in Conscience, to obey the supream Authority of it in all lawful Things. For Power being the Ordinance of God, extends to all such Things as are not countermanded by God himself; but if they command any thing that is unlawful or forbidden, we are not bound to yeild Obedience, yea we are bound not to yeild it, because we are to obey God rather than Man, when their Commands happen to clash or interfere: But then the thing must be plainly and evidently forbidden by some exprefs Law of God, before we can withhold our Obedience; for if the thing commanded be but doubtful or disputable, if the sinfulness of it doth not manifestly appear, but depends only on some remote, uncertain, and far-fetch'd Consequences,

sequences, if more and wiser Men judge it lawful than unlawful ; here in such doubtful Matters, which is our present Case, the Authority of Superiors ought to over-rule our weaker Judgments, and we must submit our private to the publick Wisdom ; and if we are at any time misled this way, it will not be ours, but the Superiors Fault, and if it be not in a Matter apparently sinful ; 'twill never be charg'd on us, but those who have the Command and Conduct of us. But how come they thus boldly to challenge a Judgment of Discretion, who, when time was, denied it to all others, tho' they put in the same Claim to it ? Are you, Sir, the only Men of Discretion, to whom all others must submit ? And must none be allowed any Judgment of it but your selves ? This is a farther Instance of your abominable Pride and Partiality.

But because this and your Plea of Conscience is mightily insisted on, as the main Dispensations from Obedience, 'twill be requisite to give some farther Account of it, which shall be done in my next. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

Sept. 26th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

E 3

L E T.

L E T T E R V I I I .

S I R,

I Consider'd in my last your Judgment of Discretion, and shew'd how far it ought to stoop to the Judgment and Discretion of Superiors. But because this, and the Pretence of Conscience (which is indeed but the same Plea) is commonly alledg'd to take off Obedience to Laws, and is by too many, thought a good Dispensation from it, I promised to give some further Account of it. To which end, I must enquire into the Nature and Rule of Conscience, and shew, when it is a good Rule to guide our Actions, and when not: To which I shall add some things touching an erroneous, doubting, and scrupulous Conscience.

1st. And First, For the Nature of Conscience; It is nothing else but a Man's Mind or Judgment, concerning the Good or Evil, the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of things; and according as the Mind is well, or ill instructed or perswaded of them, so it is either a good or bad Conscience. Now the Rule of Conscience is the Will of God, made known either by the Light of Nature, or plain Scripture, or by direct Consequence and Deductions from it; for God being the sole Lawgiver and Judge of Conscience, he alone hath the Right to govern and direct it, which he doth by all, or some of these Ways. By which we may learn

2^{dly}, When Conscience is a safe Rule to guide our Actions, and when not; and this is the more carefully to be minded, because very bad things have been done by misguided Consciences: We read of some who in killing the Apostles, thought
they

they did God good Service; and *St. Paul*, in persecuting the Church, did it, as himself declares, in all good Conscience; for, he verily thought that he ought to do many things against the Name of Christ; and 'tis well known what vile things have been acted under the Mask of a real or pretended Conscience. And therefore it must be duly regulated, before it can safely direct, or justify our Actions; and how is that? Why thus, when it is well informed out of God's Word, and passeth a right Judgment on things, then 'tis a good Guide, and leads us in the way that we should go. But when 'tis ill advis'd, and entertains wrong Notions, then 'tis a blind and false Guide, and leads into Bogs and Errors; in which last Sense, 'tis not so properly stil'd Conscience, as Humour, Fancy, and Mistaken Opinion.

For the better clearing hereof, we must note further, That there are some things which the Law of God hath made necessary by commanding them, and there are other things which it hath made sinful by forbidding them: And besides these, there are some things of a middle and indifferent Nature, which God hath neither commanded nor forbidden. In the two former sort of things, our Consciences are tied up, by a direct and immediate Obligation laid on them by God himself; for we cannot omit any thing which God hath commanded, neither can we commit any thing which he hath forbidden, without apparent sinning against him; but in the things of a middle and indifferent Nature, which are neither commanded, nor forbidden, our Conscience is at Liberty, and may be no further restrained, than by the Rules of Obedience to Governours, for the publick Good, or as we shall think fit, by the Rule of Prudence and Charity to restrain our
E 4 selves:

selves : So that, in these indifferent things, wherein the Power of the Magistrate chiefly lies, we may be restrained by Humane Laws, made for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Church and State, to the Observance whereof our Consciences are tied up, not by a direct and immediate Obligation, as in the former things ; but secondarily and mediately by Virtue of a Command of God, requiring us to obey Magistrates, and to submit to every *Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake* : And being thus oblig'd to obey them for Conscience sake, 'twill be absurd to make Conscience a Plea for disobeying them.

Now when the Mind is thus enlign'd from God's Word, and fully perswaded of the Truth of these things, taking things commanded for necessary, and things forbidden for sinful, and those that are neither the one nor the other, for things indifferent ; in which we are free any further than we are prescribed to by our Superiors, to whom we owe Obedience, as God's Ministers and Viceroy's upon Earth : When I say, the Mind is thus rightly informed in these Matters, 'tis a good, firm, and well-grounded Conscience, and is a safe Rule and Guide of our Actions ; and this is a healthy and sound Temper of Mind.

On the contrary, when the Mind is ill inform'd and unsettled, taking things lawful for unlawful, and unlawful things for lawful, abstaining from some things as sinful, which God hath no where forbidden, as Forms of Prayer, and doing other things, with an Opinion of Holiness and Necessity, which God hath no where required, as *Extempore* and varied Prayers. This is an entangled and perplexed Conscience, and it is a very uncertain and unsafe Guide of our Actions, insomuch, That to be acted by it, is not to be led by any sound Prin-

Principles of Duty and Conscience, but by the wrong Measures of Fancy, Humour, and Mistaken Opinion; and this is a very sickly, weak, and unsound State of Mind : Which will lead me to the Consideration of an Erroneous, Doubting, and Scrupulous Conscience, the three grievous Diseases and Infirmities of the Mind, and to shew how we may be best cur'd and rid of them.

And First, an erroneous Conscience is, when a thing in it self lawful, and enjoin'd by lawful Authority, shall be judged sinful, and unlawful to be done; and likewise, when a thing in its own Nature sinful, and forbidden by lawful Authority, shall yet be judg'd not only lawful, but necessary to be done : This is an erring Conscience, and brings a Man into very great Straits; for he lies under a Necessity of sinning, let him go which Way he will: If he does the thing which he judges unlawful, he acts against the Perswasion of his own Mind, and so being *not of Faith is Sin*; If he refuse the doing of it, he acts against lawful Authority, and sins in disobeying that Power in a thing which he is commanded to obey. As in the former Instance, If any shall judge a Form of Prayer, enjoin'd by Superiors, to be unlawful; here, if he uses it, he sins against the Duty he owes to his own Conscience; if he uses it not, he sins against the Duty he owes to his lawful Superiors; both ways he commits a grievous Sin, which he cannot avoid, whilst he continues in his Error. This is indeed a great and grievous Snare, and where a Man is really intangled with it; and in good earnest, he deserves Pity.

Now, To get rid of it, because our Mind cannot alter the Nature of things, we must endeavour to alter our Mind, and bring it rightly to understand the Nature of things; to which end, we
must

must bring humble and teachable Minds free from Pride, Passion, and all manner of Prejudice; not misled by Interest, Humour, or vain Conceit; but willing to learn and receive Satisfaction, consulting our lawful *Pastors*, or some other able *Divines*, that may be able and willing to direct us; weighing the Arguments on the side of Authority, as well as those against it, using as much of the prescribed Forms as we lawfully may, and going with Authority as far as we can: If this were heartily and sincerely done, there would be few Separatists or Dissenters; for Satisfaction, this way might soon be had, and wherein any were otherwise minded, God would soon reveal even this unto him.

2dly, A Doubting Conscience is, when the Mind is in suspense about the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of a thing, and hangs as it were in *aequilibrio*, having Arguments sometimes perswading it one way, and sometimes another, so that 'tis at a loss which way to incline: In this Case, if the Matter in Question be a thing enjoined by Superiors, 'tis very reasonable that Authority should turn the Scale, and that, laying aside the Doubt, we should do the thing commanded.

For in doubtful Matters, the safest Course is to be taken: Now since the Duty of Obedience is certain, and the particular Matter of the Command only doubtful, Reason wills, That we chuse a Certainty before an Uncertainty; and therefore, in such Cases, the Judgment and Authority of Superiours must over-rule, and a certain Duty take place of an uncertain Doubt.

This cannot be said to be acting against Conscience; for here the Mind being in suspense, and having not determined, or pass'd Sentence either way, it cannot be said to be more against the Con-

Conscience than with it, and the weight of Government must be esteemed very light, if it cannot carry it in such a Case ;

So that if any do but doubt of the Lawfulness or Expediency of Prescribed Forms, the Injunction of them ought to discard those Doubts and oblige them to join in the use of them.

But, does not the Apostle say, *He that doubteth is damned, if he eat* ? Yes, he that doth a thing doubtingly, wherein he is under no Command, but is left free and arbitrary to himself ; as in the Case of eating, mentioned by the Apostle, justly incurs the Peril of Damnation, because he acts against his Conscience in a thing wherein he ought to be guided by it. But if a thing be determin'd by Authority, of the Lawfulness whereof a Man is not fully perswaded, but hath only some Doubts about it ; he may, and ought to guide his Doubts, and do as he is commanded without any danger of Damnation ; for if he do amiss in it, 'twill be a Fault of the Governors who required it, and not his, whose Duty it is, in such Cases, to obey.

3dly, A Scrupulous Conscience is, when the Mind is pretty well satisfied about the Lawfulness of a thing, and yet hath some slight Fears and Scruples about it : This is a crazy and weak temper of Mind, proceeding from Melancholy, or too great Timorousness occasioned by reading some sort of Books, and conversing with some ill instructed Persons, which are apt to suggest needless Fears and Objections : And this I take to come nearest to your Case ; for tho' you are reasonably well perswaded of the Lawfulness of Forms of Prayer in general, and of ours in particular, yet you entertain your self, and feed others with some unreasonable Jealousies and Scruples about them,

must bring humble and teachable Minds free from Pride, Passion, and all manner of Prejudice; not misled by Interest, Humour, or vain Conceit; but willing to learn and receive Satisfaction, consulting our lawful *Pastors*, or some other able *Divines*, that may be able and willing to direct us; weighing the Arguments on the side of Authority, as well as those against it, using as much of the prescribed Forms as we lawfully may, and going with Authority as far as we can: If this were heartily and sincerely done, there would be few Separatists or Dissenters; for Satisfaction, this way might soon be had, and wherein any were otherwise minded, God would soon reveal even this unto him.

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Conscience than with it, and the weight of Government must be esteemed very light, if it cannot carry it in such a Case ;

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But, does not the Apostle say, *He that doubteth is damned, if he eat* ? Yes, he that doth a thing doubtingly, wherein he is under no Command, but is left free and arbitrary to himself ; as in the Case of eating, mentioned by the Apostle, justly incurs the Peril of Damnation, because he acts against his Conscience in a thing wherein he ought to be guided by it. But if a thing be determin'd by Authority, of the Lawfulness whereof a Man is not fully perswaded, but hath only some Doubts about it ; he may, and ought to guide his Doubts, and do as he is commanded without any danger of Damnation ; for if he do amiss in it, 'twill be a Fault of the Governors who required it, and not his, whose Duty it is, in such Cases, to obey.

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them, such are they about the Calendar, the Rule for finding *Easter*, the Version of the *Psalms* and some Expressions in the *Rubrick*, and other Offices, together with Assent and Consent to them: Which little Cavils or Scruples like the Flies of *Egypt*, are still buzzing about your Ears; for, I find them mentioned almost in every Letter.

Now Sir, being pretty well satisfied in the Main, if you cannot otherwise get rid of these Scruples, 'twill be your Duty and Wisdom too to throw them clear off, as the Snares and Temptations of the Devil, and to comply with decent and publick Constitutions, without minding the Clamor and Importunity of them; for if greater Doubts ought to give place to the Wisdom and Authority of Governours, certainly such little Scruples ought not to stand in Competition with them.

But the 14th Chapter to the *Romans*, say you, if well minded, would put an end to these Differences; and indeed so it would, if it were well understood and observed: For the things discours'd of in that Chapter, were things not only indifferent in their Nature, but left so as to their Use, as the eating of Herbs, and sundry sorts of Meat, the observing of Days, and the like; in which, every one had their Liberty, no Superior Power having interpos'd, either to command, or forbid them; in which Case, they sinned not in using, or abstaining from them: And therefore the Apostle wills them, *not to censure, or condemn one another*, for using this Liberty either way.

But the Case with us is very different; for, tho' the things are indifferent in themselves, and left so, as to our Judgment about them, yet our Practice is determined by the Authority of Superiors,

riors, which are to sway and over-rule in these Matters.

There are indeed, many things left arbitrary and indifferent to us, about which, Men may, and do entertain some Scruples ; as playing at Cards, and Dice, lending upon Usury, and the like ; which being under no Command, Men may do in them, as they think most convenient. Here the Case is parallel with us and the *Romans*, and all the Apostle's Directions about the one, may well enough be applied to the other.

But as for Forms of Prayer, Kneeling at the Sacrament, and the like : These being commanded by our Superiors for the Decency and Order of Publick Worship, it becomes our Duty to observe them, and our Sin to neglect, or act contrary to them.

And thus having, I hope, given you some Satisfaction as to the Plea of Conscience and Judgment of Discretion, I shall next consider your Notion of Moderation. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

Sept. 28th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T.

L E T T E R IX.

S I R,

WE have seen, That neither the Judgment of Discretion, or Plea of Conscience, can null the Obligation, or dispense with our Obedience to the wholesome Laws either of Church or State.

Let us see then what your Notion of Moderation can do towards it, whether that will not take off some part of them, or allow us to observe only so much of them as we think fit: For 'tis not for nothing that you so frequently cry up Moderation, which is a plausible Term for some Abatement. You talk much of a due Temper towards Dissenters, by which you mean (no doubt) the indulging 'em in their Schisms and Divisions: And to draw in some Church-men of your side, you often commend such as fail and falter in their Duty, for moderate Men.

Now because the Apostle wills, Phil. 4. 5. That *Our Moderation should be known unto all Men*, 'twill be requisite to inquire into the Nature and true Notion of that Vertue, that we may rightly know our selves what we are to make known unto others. To this end, we must Note,

First, That Moderation is sometimes taken for the moderate use of God's Creatures, or keeping the mean in Eating or Drinking; in this Sense 'tis the same with Temperance and Sobriety, which help to regulate our Appetite and Practice in the necessary Actions and Refreshments of humane Life. But tho' this be an excellent and useful Vertue,

tue, yet it falls not under our present Consideration.

Secondly, Moderation is sometimes taken for the well-governing our Passions and Affections, keeping them within their due Bounds, and not suffering 'em to run into Inordinacy or Excess; In this Sense 'tis the same with Meekness or Gentleness, which teach Men to moderate their Anger, and regulate all other Passions by fixing 'em upon right Objects, and keeping 'em within their due Measures and Proportions. This likewise is an excellent Vertue, and highly conduces both to the publick and private Peace.

Thirdly, Moderation is sometimes taken for the mild-interpreting and executing of Laws, Construing 'em in the more favourable Sense, and abating the Rigour and Severity of them, which in many Cases would be great Injury and Oppression. In this Sense, 'tis the same with Equity, which takes off the edge and extremity of Laws, and gives all those Allowances which are consistent with the Reason and Intention of them; this too is a great Vertue and Necessary to the Welfare and good Government of all Societies.

*Summum jus
summa injuria.*

These I take to be the principal, if not the only approved Senses of Moderation. But besides these, some have lately started a new and wild Notion of it, that was never heard of in the Church, till the Rise of our unhappy Schisms and Dissensions: Since which, some have taken Moderation for a paring off a great part of their Conformity to the Church, and complying too far with the Dissenters from it.

Thus, he that prevaricates and performs his Duty by halves, by curtailling and cutting short the Prayers of the Church, mangling and leaving
out

out what parts he pleases of them in the publick Ministrations : He that Baptizeth without the Sign of the Cross, and many times neglects the decent Habits and Gestures appointed to be used in Divine Service, such an one is stiled, and frequently passes for a moderate Man ; and such as these are the Darlings of the Dissenters, for we shall hear them commending their Moderation upon all Occasions : The plain Reason whereof is, because they do just as they would have them, that is, by neglecting some part of their Duty to the Church, they give 'em some Countenance in rejecting all ; Yea, they take these half Conformists to be inward Approvers of their ways, they think and say that their Hearts are with 'em, and would gladly come to 'em, were it not for some Advantages and Preferments in the Church that keep 'em from 'em. Now this, besides the Hollowness and Hypocrisie of the Conformity, is a most dangerous piece of Moderation, for it hardens Dissenters in their Schism, betrays the Church, and lays it open to the Assaults and Evil Designs of its greatest Enemies.

Again, he that Conforms to the Dissenters in long Pulpit-Prayers before Sermon, hastily running over the Prayers of the Church to make more room for his long-winded Conceptions, he goes for a moderate Man, and many such (you tell me) there are in the Church, with whom you have some Acquaintance, and for whom you have no small Honour.

Sir, I hope, the number of those Men are not so great as you imagine ; I am sure the Church gives 'em no leave, or encouragement for any such Practice, for this wills us in our Pulpit-Prayers to use either those Concise Words mention'd in the Canon, or some short form of our
own

own to the same effect. And the ancient practice of the Church was according to it, for we find the Fathers before their Sermons had only some *Vota pacis*, or Benedictions of the People, or some short Ejaculations imploring the Divine Assistance, as we see in the Homilies of St. *Chrysostom*, St. *Ambrose*, St. *Augustine*, &c. Where you will find either a short Collect, or Form of Prayer us'd without variation, or else only an invitation to Prayer, like the Bidding Prayer mention'd in the Canon: Yea, your great Friend Mr. *Calvin*, constantly used one short Form before Sermon, which concluded still with the Lord's Prayer, as you may find it recorded in the History of his Life.

Indeed, when our Liturgy is so well stor'd with Divine and Heavenly Prayers suited to all necessary Occasions, and when we have spent near an hour in offering 'em up unto God, for all that can be thought fit for Christians to pray for, what need can there be for beginning a new Harrangue in the Pulpit for the same things, or making a fresh address in varied Phrases for them, unless we think that God is either to be overcome with the Multitudes, or charm'd with the Novelty of Expressions, in both which we entertain low and unworthy thoughts of him.

Yea, this is not only a needless, but very mischievous Practice, and has done the Church great harm; for this slight perfunctory way of reading the Prayers has occasion'd the Contempt of 'em, and put People in love with varied *Extempore* Effusions, which tho' not half so sound either for Matter or Sense, are yet recommended to them by a more affectionate Delivery, insomuch as when they behold the Minister cold, dull and careless in the Desk, and all Life and Flame in the Pulpit, they begin to think meanly of the saint,

languid Devotion of the one, and are wholly taken up with the seeming Earnestness and Vehemency of the other.

And this has been one great Occasion of that giddiness and instability in Religion, which is the pernicious Malady and Misery of our present Age; These, with many other sad and doleful Evils, too many to be here reckon'd up, are the miserable Effects of this false Notion of Moderation, which you highly Extol and Commend in some Ministers.

But besides this, there's a piece of *Moderation* in the Laity that much resembles this, and has much the same tendency; and that is, Mens halting between two Opinions, or trimming between the Church and the Conventicle, repairing sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other, scarce ever Communicating with either, and so dividing from both; this is frequently stil'd and reputed *Moderation*, which is indeed no better than Lukewarmness, and such as was rebuk'd in the Church of *Laodicea*, *Revel. 3. 15.* where the Members of it being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm and indifferent in their Duty, our Saviour threatens to *Spue them out of his Mouth*; such Persons as these steer their Course according as the Time and Tide of worldly Interest or Honour lead 'em; if their Trade, or other Designs may be best promoted by the Church, they will be frequenters of that; if by the Conventicle, they can as freely repair thitherto. Yea, some can be content to divide their Family, to carry it fair, and keep up an Interest in both; the Husband by consent going to the one, and the Wife to the other. These make Gain their greatest Godliness, and do not so much serve God as Mammon.

If

If any of these moderate Men be put into an Office, of which they are observ'd to be not a little ambitious ; they can then go to the Prayers and Sacraments of the Church to qualifie and continue them in it, tho' they never come more, till they are drawn by the same or like occasion, which is in effect to make Sacred Things truckle to Secular, and to take the Holy Sacrament, to undermine the Communion of the Church.

Now to shew the Falshood of this Notion of *Moderation*, we must Note, That *Moderation is a Vertue* that wholly respects our Duty to Man, that is, to our selves, and one another, and consists in the due regulating our Passions and Desires with relation to both, but has no respect to our Duty unto God ; for we can use no Mean or Moderation with relation unto him ; for the stronger our Minds and Affections are carried out after him, the better it is ; if we do any Evil, 'tis all too much, if we do any Good, 'tis all too little ; there is no middle way to be observed here between both. Our Passions and Desires towards Earthly Objects may be Inordinate and Extravagant, and therefore we are required to moderate them by the Rules of Prudence and Piety. But our Duty to God admits of no Excess, we cannot Love, desire or serve him too much ; and to be moderate here, is to be Lukewarm and Hypocritical. To shorten the appointed Prayers we are to offer to him, is to defraud our Maker of his due ; yea, 'tis a sort of Sacrilege to rob God of that portion of Devotion which the Church has set apart and devoted to him ; and being made his, both by Divine and Human Laws, to withhold it from him either in whole or in part, is to transgress the Rule of our Saviour, by neither giving to *Cesar the things that*

are Cæsars, nor to God the things that are Gods, Matth. 22. 21.

In a word, to halt between two Opinions, is to halt between God and *Baal*; and he that doth his Duty by halves, and looks two different ways, does no better than falsifie and prevaricate with God and Man, for such an one has no sincerity or steadiness of Mind; but like *St. James's double-minded Man is unstable in all his ways, James 1. 8.*

And therefore we may not shelter a partial observance of the good Orders and Constitutions of the Church, under the sacred name of *Moderation*, or seek to hide the Obliquity of it under that Vizard: But we are to call it by its right Name, *viz. Lukewarmness and Hypocrisie*; for if we take off the Mask from the Face of such Conformity, nothing will appear under it, but Deformity and Double-dealing. Infomuch as *St. James* speaks of the Divine Law, *He that keepeth the whole Law, and offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all, James 2. 10.* Because he flights the Authority in one that Commands and Confirms all the rest. So he that violates the Authority of the Church in one thing, will easily do it in another, and as Interest and Occasion serves, will be ready to do it in all. I am

S I R,

Yours,

M. H.

L E T

L E T T E R X.

S I R,

I Hope by this time you begin to see the Falshood of your Notion of Moderation, and how unjustly 'tis alledg'd to take off the Obligation either in whole or in part, to publick Orders and Constitutions.

I proceed now to your Plea of Toleration, to see what that can do towards it.

And here, the great thing you insist upon, is a late Act of Parliament for Exempting Protestant Subjects from the Penalties of some Laws: By which you conceive that the Conventicle stands upon as good, legal and firm Ground as the Church; and would have the People believe your Preaching in separate Meetings, as much Establish'd, as our publick Assemblies. But with what little shew of Reason this is affirm'd, I hope, the sequel of this Letter will plainly discover.

But first, I cannot but observe, That before the making of that Act, your Conventicles were as frequent, and with as little regret, as they have been since; And I find you declaring in your Letter of *June* the 30th, That tho' you have a Law permitting and allowing your Preaching, yet you still counted it your Duty before, and your Practice was accordingly: So that whatever claim you make to a Law, 'tis no better than a meer pretence. For 'tis plain, That you matter not the Law, but will do as you think fit, as well without, as with it; however, since you have it, you will not fail to make the best of it. And tho' the Title of it, shews it only to be an Exemption

from some Penalties, yet you will not have it thought barely an Allowance, but an Approbation of your Assemblies, which shews how much you extend Favour further than you should ; and if the Government at any time give you an Inch, how apt and ready you are to take an Ell. And therefore to give a check to this Vanity, I must tell you,

2dly. That the Law you insist upon, does not take off the Obligation of repairing to the Establish'd Churches ; but only suffers you to go unpunish'd, if you do otherwise. Now if you would rightly consider the nature of Laws, and the true Principle of Obedience to them, you would soon see, That the bare suspending the Punishment, is far from annulling the Obligation of Laws : For the clearing of which, I shall premise a few things, that may help to give some light to it.

1st. And First, In all Laws two things are to be consider'd, *viz.* a Precept, requiring some thing to be done, or left undone : And a Penalty to be inflicted upon the doing, or not doing of it : In the first of these consists the Nature and Essence of a Law, which lies in commanding something to be done, or not done ; and this is to be a Rule to govern the Actions, and oblige the Consciences of such as are subjected to the higher Powers ; whereas the latter is only a Circumstance added to it to make it observ'd : By which it appears,

2dly. That the Penalty appertains not to the Being or Essence of a Law, but is meerly an accidental Adjunct or Appendix annex'to it, to enforce Obedience : Were all Men led (as they should be) by Principles of Conscience, there would be no need or use of Penalties ; But because too many thro' the pravity of their Natures, lose the Sense of their Duty, and are led by Humour,
Interest

Interest and corrupt Designs away from it, Punishments become necessary to reduce them to it. Furthermore, you must note,

3dly, That the main Reason of our Obligation to Laws, is founded on the Will of the Law-giver, sufficiently made known; for he having a Commission and Authority from God, to command in all lawful things, we are therefore bound in Duty and Conscience to obey him therein as God's Minister : So that, whensoever he duly declares and publishes his Mind, then does the Obligation commence; and ceases not, till he think fit to countermand and recall it.

4thly, We must observe a double Principle or Motive of Obedience, the one for Wrath or Fear of Punishment, the other for Conscience sake; now our Obedience to Laws, is, by the Apostle's Direction, to be grounded on both, but chiefly on the latter; for he wills all Christians to be subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake; so that if the Fear of Wrath, or the Displeasure of the Magistrate be gone, by removing of the Penalty, there remains another and stronger Tye to our Duty, even the Obligation of Conscience, which must hold us to it, while the preceptive part of the Law remains, tho' the coercive ceases.

Now from these Propositions duly consider'd, these two things will necessarily follow.

1st. That while the Will and Pleasure of the Law-giver is to continue a Law, which must be suppos'd, till the preceptive part of it, wherein it mainly consists, be repeal'd; so long the Law continues in force, and the Obligation of it remains.

2dly, That the bare Suspension of the Penalty, is no repealing of a Law; for while the preceptive

part, which is the Essence of the Law remains, it still keeps its Force, and our Obedience to it is not superseded, by the ceasing of the Punishment. In short then, seeing the things commanded in those Laws, that require Conformity to the Church, continue still unrepeal'd, and nothing taken off but the Punishment, which belongs not to the Essence of them, it evidently follows, that the Obligation to them remains, and that the Subjects are still bound to do what is still required by them, which was the thing to be prov'd.

The want of a right Understanding of these things, hath occasioned many and great Mistakes in this Matter : For,

1st. It was not long, since you took the undergoing the Penalty, to be the keeping of the Law ; for when you were charged with Disobedience to the lawful Injunction of Superiors, your Reply was, That tho' you did not what the Law requir'd, yet you suffer'd what the Law inflicted ; and this you thought sufficiently answer'd the end of the Law. Now the Weakness of this arguing will easily appear, by considering that 'tis the preceptive Part that is the Form or Essence of the Law, and if you disobey that, you cannot be said to keep the Law, by undergoing the Punishment which is inflicted only for the Breach of it : Yea, the end of the Penalty, being only to enforce Obedience to the thing commanded, to suffer the one without doing the other, is to contradict and defeat the ends of both. Indeed where the Matter of a Law is sinful, their undergoing the Penalty is as much as a good Christian may or ought to do ; and in such Cases, Submission is required when Obedience is not : But where the Matter of a Law neither is, nor can be proved unlawful, there 'tis not the suffering what is inflicted, but doing

doing what is required that answers the end of the Law. For the primary Intention of all Laws, and Lawgivers, is not the Punishment and grieving the Subjects, but their observing what is commanded them, for the good of the Common-wealth : He that thinks the Magistrate is well pleas'd with punishing the Contempt, as rewarding Obedience to his Laws, must think unworthily of him ; and he that makes this the Rule and Measure of his Actions, is no better Observer of Laws than the Thief, or the Traytor, who are hang'd for the Breach of them. Again,

2dly, As you formerly mistook the suffering the Penalty for keeping of the Law ; so now you are fallen into the quite contrary Mistake, and take the not-suffering the Penalty for the keeping of it : For you imagine the late Act exempting you from the Punishment of some Laws, hath freed you from any farther Duty or Obligation to them.

These Errors you unawares run into, merely by over-looking the principal and preceptive Part of Laws, and having an Eye only or chiefly to the coercive Part ; by which means, if you are not at any time subject, 'tis merely for Wrath, and not for Conscience sake. Again,

3dly, This hath led you into a farther Mistake, and made you take the suspending the Penalties for the Abrogation of the Laws ; for you imagine, That the Act of Uniformity, and all the Laws against Conventicles, to have lost their Force from your being exempted from the Penalties of them : Which shews, That you place the Obligation of Laws, not in the Matter, or Things enjoined by them, but wholly and solely in the Penalties annex'd to them ; so that when these are taken off, the other of course are gone with them. Yea,

4thly,

4thly, You have a wilder Conceit than all this ; for you imagine, That the removing the Penalties, not only removes the Obligation of Laws, but establishes the things forbidden by them : For, you take Conventicles to be allow'd and establish'd, by that Law which merely exempts you from being punished for them, which shews your deep reach in the Knowledge of the Laws, or rather, your gross Prevarications in the Observance of them.

In your Letter of *July 11th*, you tell me, That your Places of Meeting, are as lawfully allowed as our Temples ; now our Temples being establish'd by Law, yours, it seems, must have the same Authority : And in your Letter of *June 30th*, you say, 'tis to arraign the Government, to affirm otherwise. 'Tis to be fear'd, Sir, That your Confidence in time, will mount you so high, as to reckon it a Crime to go to Church, and to shut up all Religion and Virtue within the Walls of a Conventicle.

But let us hear what you have to say for these things ; and 1st, you tell me, That this Law amounts to more than a Suspension of the Penalty : For it allows your Congregations, guards them from Disturbance, and exempts the Ministers from serving in any secular Office, which is a sort of Reward.

Sir, the Allowance mentioned in that Act, implies no Approbation of your Congregations, much less any Establishment of them, but merely a winking at them for some temporal Reasons : To keep any from disturbing them, amounts to no more than a bare Permission or Toleration : And for exempting you from secular Offices, 'tis a privilege granted to all in holy Orders ; of which you make a very bad use, to think it a Reward
for

for your making, and continuing Divisions. But you go on to tell me, That if it were a bare Suspension of the Penalty, yet that were enough to render them void of any Obligation on your Consciences to Obedience, because they are merely Penal Laws.

Sir, if you account all Laws that have a Penalty annex'd to the Breach of them, to be Penal Laws, you may then reckon the Ecclesiastical Laws, and indeed all other Laws in that Number, there being scarce any to be found without it: But to reckon them merely Penal upon that account, is a great Mistake; to rectifie which you must know, That there are some Laws express'd in Disjunctive Terms, requiring to do this or that, as in the Case of bearing such an Office, or paying such a Fine: Here the Law is purely Penal, and paying the Fine answers the end of it, being left in the Power of the Subject to chuse either; but there are other Laws, that directly and positively require something to be done, or not done, with a Penalty added to the Violation of it; and here 'tis not the suffering the Punishment, but observing the thing, that satisfies the Law. Of this kind are the Laws that establish Conformity, where he that does not what is commanded, is a Transgressor of the Law, and justly suffers for the Breach of it. But you prove these to be merely Penal Laws, because they require things that are no way apt to promote the common Good, and till we prove them otherwise, you will never be sensible of their pretended Obligation.

Sir, Are Unity, Order and Decency in the publick Worship, which are the subject of these Laws, things no way apt to promote the common Good? Do you not read many express Precepts and Exhortations to them for the Benefit and Edification
of

of the Church? Certainly, if you have any Sense of Duty to the Laws of God, or Man, these things will carry more than a pretended Obligation.

But you have one thing more to say in your Letter of *June* 28th, and that is, That the Law does not only call your Liberty an Allowance, but also that 'tis for the Ease of Conscience. Now the Suspension of the Penalty is only (say you) for the Ease of the Back and the Purse; but 'tis the taking off the Obligation, that is for the Ease of Conscience.

Sir, All the Ease granted or intended by that Act, relates only to the Persons and Purse of Dissenters, which are thereby exempted from the Temporal Fines and Penalties annex'd to the Breach of some Laws, which is all that the Civil Magistrate can do; but may not be extended to the taking off the Guilt or Obligation to Eternal Punishments, which none but God, the sole Law-giver and Judge of Conscience hath Power to remove.

Now Schism, which is a Breach of the Peace and Unity of the Church, being forbidden by the Law of God, cannot have its Guilt or Obligation to eternal Punishment taken off by suspending the Temporal Penalties, much less can it become lawful or made harmless by humane Laws. I hope, you do not think that Impunity can void the Obligation of Divine Laws, or that a thing ceases to be a Sin, because it ceaseth to be punish'd by the Civil Magistrate; for then Theft, Adultery and Murder would be no Crimes, if the Punishment of them were at any time forborn and suspended: *And if Sentence against an evil Work be not executed presently, the Hearts of the Children of Men might be safely set in them to do Evil, Eccles. viii. 11.*

But

But how come they to plead for Toleration now, who not long since, thought and stil'd it intolerable? Is that which was then the Mother of Confusion, the Nurse of Schism, and the Step-mother of Edification, as Jus. Div. Reg. Eccl. they were wont to call it, become of a sudden the Parent of all true Religion and Vertue? No certainly, the Matter is, That 'twas other Mens Case then, and 'tis their own now, and that makes a mighty Alteration: Are you not asham'd of such gross Partiality, which is enough to make a Forehead of Brasse to blush?

I shall conclude this Letter with the Words of your beloved *John Calvin*, who tells us, That in a true Church, where the Word of God is truly preach'd, and the Sacraments Instit. L. 4. cap. 1. Sect. 10. duly administred, none may presume to despise the Authority, or resist the Admonitions, or refuse the Counsels, or slight the Corrections of it, much less to withdraw from it and break its Unity, and go unpunished: Adding, That God so highly esteems the Communion of the Church, that he accounts him a Renegade or Deserter of Religion, who wilfully abstains and alienates himself from the Fellowship of it. By which you plainly see the Sense of the Father and Founder of your Sect in this Matter. I am

S I R,

Tours,

M. H.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I.

S I R,

HAVING in the former Letters asserted the reasonableness of injoyning Forms of Prayer upon all Persons and Occasions for Publick Worship: And likewise shew'd the Vanity of all your Pleas and Pretences to the contrary: I proceed now to consider, what you have to say against the Antiquity of Forms, to see how we may adjust Matters there.

And here I find you are very cautious of granting any thing, for fear of giving Countenance to Liturgies; and disparaging the great *Diana* of *Extempore*-Prayer: For you will scarce allow, That our Blessed Saviour intended his Prayer for a Form; or that it hath been us'd as such, in the Christian Church, lest other Forms should gain credit, and get ground by such a Concession: Thereby verifying the Observation of our late Glorious Martyr King *Charles* the
 Ἐκκλ. Βασιλ. First, concerning the Lord's Prayer,
 Ch. 16. That its great Guilt is, to be the Warrant and original Pattern of all set Liturgies in the Christian Church. For

Here you say, we are wont to lay the first Stone in the whole Fabrick of Conformity. And where can we better lay it than on the Words of him who is both the Foundation and chief corner Stone in the whole Fabrick of the Christian Church?

And yet we derive the Original of Forms much higher, even from the very Beginning; for the
 Learned

Learned *Fagius* makes it as ancient as the Times of *Enoch*, when Men began publicly to call upon the Name of the Lord. And 'tis abundantly prov'd by the Holy Scripture, and the Jewish Writers, That Forms of Prayer and Praises were us'd all along in the Jewish Church, from whence our Blessed Saviour deriv'd his.

Gen. 4. ult.

Gen. 4. 26.

Yea, many Learned Men have observ'd, That our Saviour was so far from affecting Novelties and Variations, that he took every Sentence of his Prayer out of the Jewish Forms then in use, as hath been fully prov'd by Dr. *Lightfoot*, and other Learned Men.

Vol. 2. p. 158.

Idem on

Matth. 6. 9.

For when Christ's Disciples ask'd him, to give them a Form of Prayer, that they might be known to be his Disciples, as the Jewish Doctors were wont to do to theirs: He gave them no New Prayer, but the same he had given them a Year and half before in his Sermon on the Mount, partly as one hath well observ'd, because there was no need of any other, and partly because a better could not be given.

And yet you tell me, That we build more upon this Prayer than 'twill be ever able to bear: How so? We build the lawfulness and expediency of using this and other Forms Compos'd by it; and I hope 'twill well enough bear that; and that so much at least may be allow'd to Christ's Practice and Commands, as to be able to warrant these things. No (say you) 'twas design'd only for a Directory to frame other Prayers by, and not a Form of Prayer to be us'd in the same Words.

But

But was it design'd think you, only for a Directory for *Extempore-Prayer*, or rather was it not a Direction to frame other publick Forms by? If you search into Antiquity, you will find no mention at all of the former, whereas all Christian Churches have thro' every Age made use of it for the latter. Hence a very Learned Author hath told us, That all Authentick Liturgies, and ours in particular, are groundd upon, and drawn up by the Lord's Prayer. All the Collects for Grace being groundd on the three first Petitions; the Prayers for all Earthly Blessings are groundd upon the request for our daily Bread; the Confessions and Litanies for Pardon and Deliverance from Sin, and all other kinds of Evils, upon the three last Petitions; and the Thanksgivings, Hymns and Praises upon the Doxology.

And here, tho' in honour to our Master, we use this Prayer as a Form in the same Words, and likewise make it the Pattern and Platform of all our other Prayers and parts of Devotion; Yet you ask me a wise Question, *sc.* Whether I think my self oblig'd to use the words of the Lord's Prayer, and no other?

No, Sir, I think my self oblig'd to use the Lord's Prayer in Obedience to the Command of my Saviour, and other Prayers Compos'd and Establish'd according to that excellent Platform in Obedience to the Commands of my Superiors.

But how say you, Can we use the Lord's Prayer in the same words, and make it an invariable part of our Devotions, when the same words are not us'd in both the Evangelists that record it? For there is a variation of the Words in the 4th and 5th Petitions; in the 4th, St. *Matthew* hath it, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*, St. *Luke*, *Give us*
Day

Day by Day our daily Bread; in the 5th, the one hath, *Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors*; the other, *Forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive them that are indebted unto us*; and what is more material, say you, in *St. Luke*, the Doxology is wholly left out. But, Sir, may not the difference of Copies, and the length of Time easily occasion so small an alteration? And are we not infinitely beholding to the Providence of God, in handing it down to us thro' so many Ages with so little variation? This is rather to be own'd with Thankfulness, than to be made a Cavil against the use of it: May not this Day, which is spoken every Day, in various Copies easily change into *Day by Day*? Is there any material difference between Sins and Debts, in respect of God, which you grant import the same thing? And is this a just Pretence for laying aside such a Divine and Perfect Model of Devotion? And whereas the Doxology mention'd by the one, is omitted by the other; which may be ascrib'd either to the different Occasions, or to the difference of Transcribers; our Church seems wisely to have comply'd with both, by using it sometimes with, and sometimes without it. But,

Why should you be so unwilling to grant the Lord's Prayer to be made use of as a Form in the same Words? Sure there is some Mystery in this, which is but an Objection of Yesterday, and never till very lately call'd in question by any. Why,

The plain design of it is, by endeavouring to weaken the Lord's Prayer, as a Form, to shake the Authority of all other Forms; and if you can find any different and varied Expressions there, 'twill give some Countenance to your other new and beloved Variations: But 'twill become you, Sir,

to have better Thoughts, and likewise to make better use of this Divine Form, than to abuse and pervert it to such bad Ends; Considering what high Presumption it is, to lay aside this Prayer, as if we could Pray as well, or better without it, when it was mainly given, because we cannot Pray at all.

Now here you ask again, (for you so far suspect the truth of what you write, that you lay it down by Queries rather than Positions) I say you ask farther, whether the Lord's Prayer as a prescribed Form were to last beyond his Resurrection, and the Effusion of the Holy Ghost? Why not? Is there any shew of Reason or Authority to limit it only to that time? Does not our Saviour say absolutely when ye pray, say, *Our Father*, &c. and when he hath not given the least intimation of its being Temporary, what Presumption is it to pretend the Precepts of Christ to be out of date? May not this Artifice make void all the Commandments of God by fixing them to a certain Period, and taking off their Obligation from all that live beyond? Take heed, Sir, of such Arts.

But if Christ had intended it for a perpetual Form, (say you with other of your Brethren) it cannot be imagin'd that he should leave out his own Name.

Sir, To ask in Christ's Name, is to ask through Christ's Merits, which did not take place till after his Death and Resurrection; and likewise to ask in vertue of his Mediation, as our Intercessor and Advocate at God's Right Hand, which was a Priviledge that commenc'd not till after his Ascension into Heaven; and therefore we find the Disciples, who before that had asked nothing in his Name, were after

Joh. 16. 24.

after injoin'd and encouraged to ask any thing in it with an assurance of being heard.

Besides, tho' Christ's Name be not expressly mention'd in the Lord's Prayer, yet 'tis virtually implied in almost every Petition of it; for we cannot call God Father, but upon the account of Christ; neither can we ask forgiveness of Sins, or deliverance from any Evils, but thro' his Mercy and Mediation; so that this can be no shadow of Reason, either to detract from the Honour, or to lay aside the use of this Divine Form. But I must not wholly pass by what you offer against the Testimonies I produc'd for the use of the Lord's Prayer, as a Form in the several Ages of the Christian Church.

In the first Age after the Apostles, the *μία προσευχή* *μία* & *ἑνός* of Ignatius, that is, the one Prayer or the one Supplication, must be understood of the Lord's Prayer, or of one common Prayer Compos'd by it. For if their Prayers were varied every Day, they could not properly be called one Prayer: And against this I do not find any Objection.

In the second Century, when I cited the Testimony of *Lucian*, for the use of the Lord's Prayer: You except against him because he was a Scoffing Pagan: But, Sir, may not a Scoffer be a good Witness for the use of the thing which he Scoffs at? Are not the Atheists and the Deists good Witnesses of the general belief of a God, and the Holy Scriptures in the present Age, tho' themselves are too apt to deny the one and deride the other?

To the Testimony of *Tertullian*, *St. Cyprian*, and other Fathers in the following Ages, for the use of the Lord's Prayer, tho' you struggle and labour hard to say something: Yet 'tis with so lit-

the appearance of Reason or Truth, that it needs no Answer.

And you are so choak'd with the Testimony of *Calvin*, and other Divines abroad, and likewise with the Assembly of Divines at home, who both us'd the Lord's Prayer themselves, and recommended the use of it as a Form to others, that you wisely enough let it pass without saying much to it: And therefore if you will take the advice of a Friend, I think you were better yield this Point, than wrangle any more about it.

And thus having, I hope, pretty well clear'd the use of the Lord's Prayer in the same Words. I shall next consider what you have to say against the Antiquity and use of Liturgies Compos'd by it. In the mean time, I am

S I R,

Aug. 19th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T T E R XII.

S I R,

I Shew'd in my last; the Lord's Prayer to be intended as a Form, and so used by the Christian Church, and likewise vindicated it from the Disuse and Contempt which some have cast upon it; tho' 'tis sad that our unhappy and divided Age should make such a Task necessary. In the
next

next place then, I am to consider what you say against the Antiquity of Liturgies, and other Forms of Prayer compos'd by it.

And here I cannot but take notice of a pretty Conceit of yours, concerning Liturgies, in your Letter of *July* the 6th; for finding them often mention'd in the Ancient Fathers, you think fit to put in your Claim to them, and will have them understood not so much of a Book of prescrib'd stinted Forms, as of unwritten and *Extempore* Prayers in the publick Ministrations.

Alas! What will not some Men say or do to help out a bad Cause? But where, Sir, in any of the Fathers is *Extempore* Prayer so much as mention'd, much less stil'd a Liturgy, or made any part of it? And indeed, how is it possible it should be, when it consists only of present and sudden Conceptions? Were not the Ancient Liturgies the set and standing Offices of publick and solemn Devotion, that were well known to the People, who bore a part in them, and had often Recourse to them? And how can this be said of *Extempore* Prayers, where neither Minister nor People know any thing of it before, nor scarce remember any thing of it after?

But in this, and likewise in what follows concerning the Liturgies of *St. Peter*, *St. Mark*, and *St. James*, tho' you vainly think you have done great Feats, and made some new Discoveries, to the utter confounding of Liturgies; yet 'tis all taken out of a Book, Intituled, *A Reasonable Account why some Non-conforming Ministers refuse to perform their Ministerial Acts of Solemn and Publick Worship, by the prescrib'd Forms of others.* And likewise out of a Posthumous Piece of Mr. *David Clarkson's*; both which Books being so fully answered and refuted, the one by Dr. *Falkner*, in his *Vindi-*

cation of *Liturgies*, the other by Dr. *Comber*, in his *Original and Use of them*: I shall not need to add any thing to the Labours of those learned Men, and therefore shall only refer you to them.

But there is no valuable Antiquity, (say you) but the three first Centuries; and if the Use of *Liturgies* can't be found and prov'd there, you are resolv'd to have no value for them.

Sir, Though we want not Proof of the Use of *Liturgies*, in those early Times of Christianity: Yet learned Men have given such wise and sufficient Reasons, why we may not expect to hear so much of them in these as in the following Ages, as may well enough satisfy any rational and well-meaning Man about it: If you have not consider'd them, I will recommend some of them to your serious Consideration: As First,

The Continuance of the extraordinary Gifts and Assistances of the Holy Ghost, for some Ages after the Apostles, may be a good Reason of our hearing and reading so little of Forms at that time; for whilst the publick Offices of Religion were perform'd by those Gifts, there could not be so great need or use of them: And consequently there can be no Reason why we should expect to hear so much of them. St. *Chrysostom*, who liv'd in the Fourth Century, tells us, That the extraordinary Gift of Prayer, by which the publick Ministrations were perform'd, ceased but a little before his time:

And therefore, as Dr. *Comber* hath
Dr. Comber of Liturg. p. 77. well observ'd, this being the first Age of the ceasing of these Miraculous Gifts, if Forms of Prayer then succeeded in the room of them, 'tis abundantly enough to warrant the Use of them. Again,

Secondly, The same learned Author tells us, That the Fathers of the First Century, were so wholly

wholly imployed about converting the Nations to Christianity, that they wrote very little; and very little of what they wrote, is, by the Misfortune of Time, come down to our hands: So that, we cannot reasonably expect much Evidence for Liturgies in this Century; wherein, yet as there is nothing against them, so we find enough from *Philo* and *Josephus*, *Clemens Romanus*, *Pliny* and *Ignatius*, to confirm us in the belief of them. Moreover,

Thirdly, The Fathers of the Second Century likewise, did not write much; and in what they did, they took particular Care not to publish their Church-Service, lest the Pagans, under whom they lived, should deride and blaspheme their Sacred Mysteries; and therefore, we must not look for any clear Evidence for Liturgies as yet, when the Christians conceal'd their Worship, for fear of exposing it: And yet in this Age, as Churches began to be planted and settled, we have as much notice of Forms, as can reasonably be look'd for, as appears by the Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, *Irenaus*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and *Tertullian*. Against which we find but two weak Objections, the one from *Justin Martyr's* *ὅτι ἑκράνεν*, and the other from *Tertullian's* *Sine Monitore, quia de pectore*; both which, are so fully answer'd by *Dr. Comber*, and other learned Men, that he who shall urge them any further, will only shew himself endow'd with the Quality of a scolding Woman, to take no Answer, nor sit down quietly under the clearest Satisfaction. Again,

Fourthly, We read of the Fathers of the Third Century, That tho' they wrote more, yet were so busied, not only in converting of Heathens, but in confuting of Hereticks, with whom they had to do, that we can't yet expect to hear much of their

Id. p. 5. their way of Worship, " Which in
 " those Days of Persecution, was ge-
 " nerally perform'd in private: Besides, the Here-
 " ticks denying the Authority of the Church, would
 " not allow of any Arguments taken from the Rites
 " and Offices of their Worship, which was com-
 " pos'd and appointed by it; and for that Rea-
 son, they made but rare and little mention of
 them: And yet, in this Age, we have the Testi-
 monies of *Hippolytus*, *Origen*, *St. Cyprian* and *Gre-
 gory Thaumaturgus*; from whom the Centuriators
 of *Magdeburgh* plainly declare, That 'tis without
 all Question, that they had set Forms of Prayer
 in this Age.

However, all these things well consider'd, may
 abundantly satisfy any wise Man, why we cannot
 have so full and clear Evidence for these things,
 in that which you call the best Antiquity, the
 three first Centuries.

Let us go on then to the 4th Century, which
 if there were no Evidence before, is time enough
 for our Purpose: This being the first Age (as the
 forecited Author observes) " When Miraculous
 " Gifts ceased, and the Church was settled under
 " Christian Magistrates; for since, we plead for
 " a Prescrib'd Liturgy in an Establish'd Church,
 " it is as much Antiquity as our Cause needs, to
 " shew it from this Age; which is as soon as the
 " Primitive Churches Circumstances and ours did
 " agree.

And here we are surrounded with Evidence for
 the Use of Liturgies, being confirmed by as many
 unquestionable Witnesses, as any Matter of Fact
 can be attested withal, which is as much as any
 reasonable Man can desire. The ample Testimony
 of the Fathers of this, and the following Centuries,
 are cited in my 15th Letter, of the Antiquity of
 Liturgies;

Liturgies; to which I may add, the Testimony of *Capellus*, and other Foreign Divines, who acknowledge, That a publick Form of Liturgy hath obtain'd, in the Universal Church throughout the whole World, for above Thirteen Hundred Years; and adds, That it doth now every where obtain, save among some upstart Sects and Independents. Yea, *Smeethynus*, which was a Club of Presbyterian Divines here at home, date the Rise and Use of Liturgies from this Century, deriving it from the Council of *Laodicea*, which sat about the Year 364. and likewise from the Councils of *Carthage* and *Milevis*, which sat somewhat after; and being convinc'd by the Practice of this, and the following Ages, they with their Adherents, still kept to the Use of the Publick Liturgy, till very lately, a new Race of Dissenters are started up in these times of Liberty, who are Enemies to all Forms, and consequently to all establish'd Order and Discipline, and seem inclin'd to drive the Principles of Confusion as far as they will go.

But let us hear what you have to say against these Testimonies.

To the Testimony of *Eusebius*, who tells us, That *Constantine*, besides the appointed Prayers, ordered a Form of Prayer to be compos'd for the Use of the Soldiers. To this you say, let any one judge whether this doth not prove, That there was then no publick Liturgy. What, because a new Form was drawn up for the Use of his Soldiers? Had not we lately, Prayers fram'd to be us'd at Sea, and will that prove that we had no Liturgy or Common-Prayer before? Are you not asham'd of such Reasoning?

To the Testimony of *Calvin*, and other Foreign Divines, you tell me, That all that *Calvin* said or did, about the Use of Forms, was merely to comply with

with the Difficulties and Darknes of the Time in which he lived ; which you say, more than once, was so gross that the People were perswaded to eat Hay : And 'tis no wonder, that the Hay and Stubble of Liturgies was built upon the Foundation of Christianity in such a dark Age, or that *Calvin* wink'd at them in those Times of Ignorance.

But were all those Lights that helped us out of the Darknes of Popery, so much in the dark too ; and that in a Matter wherein they had the Consent of all former Ages ? Certainly you think that our Reformers too, who shew'd greater Wisdom than any before or since, were in the dark likewise, or at best, had but a weak glimmering Light, which is broke out upon you in its Meridian Splendor. You take the Continuance of Liturgies to be the Continuance of Ignorance and Darknes, and consequently you who lay them aside, have a marvelous Light shining round about you, whereas we that continue to use them do but walk on still in Darknes, and sit in the very Regions of the Shadow of Death. One would think the bare mentioning of these things should fill you with blushing, and make you asham'd of such unparallel'd Pride and Folly.

But you have a worse Charge than all this, against Liturgies ; and that is, That they breed nothing but Loofness and Laziness in those that use them, and give your Reasons for it too, which must be consider'd in my next. I am

S I R,

Aug. 25th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T^r

LETTER XIII.

To J. M.

S I R,

I Have been endeavouring of late to Compromise Matters in difference between us, shewing how we agree in the Main, and rectifying some few Mistakes, that create and continue the difference: Hoping by this means to bring things to some good Issue. But I am sorry to find that you are inclin'd to break off the Treaty, and whilst we retain our Liturgy, will hear nothing of an Accommodation. For in your Letter of July the 1st, you tell me that Liturgies and Laziness settled together; and in the same Letter, you have these Words, *sc.*

“ That which I have affirm'd, and will stand to,
 “ is this, That the establishing Forms for Universal
 “ Use (particularly our Liturgy) or the Imposition
 “ of them on all Ministers, to be used in publick
 “ Prayer, and none other, does open a Door for a
 “ lazy (I might venture to say a loose) Ministry to
 “ enter in; and that in the present lapsed State of
 “ Discipline, many such in the Ministry must be
 “ expected, yea, are.

Now this is a bold Stroke indeed, in which you act the part not of a puny Slanderer, to cast a little Dirt here and there; but like a Whole-sale Calumniator, strike home, and fall foul upon the whole Christian Church in all Ages, which ever since she hath retain'd Liturgies, which is from the beginning, hath cherished only a pack of loose and idle Drones. This you say you have affirm'd,
 and

and like an undaunted Champion that scorns to flinch, you will stand to it and prove it too : And that

First, From the very Nature of the thing, which will make it appear, that this Loosness and Laziness are not any accidental Faults occasioned by the Negligence of some Persons, but the natural and necessary Effects of Liturgies ; and whosoever useth them, must unavoidably fall into these Enormities. Bravely charg'd ! And if you pursue this well, you must necessarily rout all Liturgies out of the World. Well, but how is this made good ? Why thus ;

The Mind of Man is naturally sluggish, and will take its Ease, and remit the Reins if it be not urg'd by some Necessity, or attracted by Delight and Complacency ; and the best of Men had need of all Obligations, to keep it to its Duty.

Very true ; but is there no way to employ the Mind, or to cure this Sluggishness, but by making new Prayers ? Must the Mind necessarily remit the Reins, if the Tongue be kept in with Bit and Bridle ? Does the great Work and Business of the Soul lie in studying new Expressions ? And must the Prayer be dull, and the Effect of Laziness, if the Phrases are not varied ? May not the Mind be well employ'd in a hearty and devout use of pious and well compos'd Forms ? No, say you, a Musician will be weary if he have constantly the same Instrument and Tunes : Variety pleases in Diet, Novelty affects in Recreations, and Commonness dulls, &c.

So that the Mind must be entertain'd as much with Varieties in Religion, as the Fancy of a Fidler with new Tunes ; and we must have as much Change and Novelty in our Prayers, as in our Diet and Recreations, or else we shall grow weary of them.

And

And is not this an admirable way, think you, to keep Men firm and stable in their Religion, to be daily ringing Changes, and putting the Matter of their Prayers every Day into new Phrases? Hath not this Variety of Prayers already, begot a Variety of Opinions? Does not Mr. *Baxter* tell you, that this is apt to breed Giddiness and Hypocrisy? And have we not found Confusion enough already from this Principle, but you must needs cherish it to breed more?

But must all Men necessarily be lazy, that use a Liturgy? Then what a parcel of idle, lazy Persons have all former Christians been through every Age, that have spent their time only in the old *Mumpsimus* of Forms, without taking any Pains to invent, or make any new Prayers of their own? This, Sir, is a Calumny sharper than a two-edged Sword, that wounds the whole Catholick Church, and cuts through all Generations. But is there no taking Pains in Prayer, without the Invention and study of new Words? Does not the principal Work of it lie in taking Pains with the Heart, to keep that close and intent upon the Duty, which is much better pains-taking than pumping for new Phrases, this being for the most part but Labour in vain, and such as may very well be let alone? For since, the whole Matter of publick Prayers may be, and is compriz'd in well-digested Forms, what need can there be to cloath it in a daily Change and Diversity of Expressions? Yea, this is not only needless, but hurtful Labour; for it takes off the Heart from the main Work, and hinders it from minding the great Business of Prayer. And will you charge them with Laziness, who only decline such lost Labour, and in the mean time employ themselves to much better purpose?

Besides,

Besides, Sir, There is no such great Labour in this *Extempore* way of Praying, as you would have the World believe: 'Tis a Knack that is easily learn'd and easily perform'd; a Teeming Imagination, and a ready Tongue will pour out Words enough without any great pains or difficulty; and he that hath gotten any dexterity this way, may as easily impose upon the People with this flight of the Tongue, as Juglers do with the flight of Hand: And I think, if all things were well known, this will be found a more loose and lazy way of Praying, than that which you charge with it. But you have

Secondly, Another way of proving this Charge, and that is, by appealing to the Experience of Mankind, whether such an Imposition does not tend to let in a lazy Ministry? And here I think the Experience of the best and wisest part of Mankind will be clearly against you; for they see and know, that keeping to a Form of sound Words in Prayer, will help to keep Men more steady and sound in their Religion, more serious and diligent in the sober Exercise and Practice of true Devotion, than your changeable Method and Study of Variations. But

May not a Child of Ten Years Old, (say you) read the Prayers and Homilies as distinctly and laudably as a learned Divine? I think very hardly? And he must be a very forward Child that can arrive to that at those Years. But if this may be done, 'tis rather a Commendation than Disparagement of our Liturgy and Homilies, that all things in them are brought down to the meanest Capacities, so that the youngest Persons can distinctly read them; and he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, may say, *Amen* to them; and if this may be done by young Children in our Prayers,

Prayers, 'tis more than can be done by Older and Wiser Men in yours. But if so considerable a part of a Ministers Work, say you, be only to read a Liturgy, that may be done as laudably *Extempore*, as upon the longest Premeditation. And why should you not like that which helps you to Read as well as to Pray *Extempore*? The pains after a little use is much the same; and the only difference is, that the Mind is better edified by the one, and the Fancy more gratified by the other.

But 'twill be hard, say you, to convince Men, that the Gift of Reading is more admirable in the Minister at Church, than in their Children at Home: This is the same with that profane Objection of some loose Persons, who ask, what need they go to Church, when they can read the same, or as good things at home? But, Sir, are not the publick Offices of Religion to be prefer'd before the private? Hath not our Saviour promis'd a greater Blessing to them that assemble and meet together in his House, than those that abide at home in their own? And does not the Apostle give a strift Charge to Heb. 10. 25. Christians, not to forsake the Assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is?

Besides, does not the Order, Office, and Authority deriv'd by Christ upon his Ministers, give a greater Efficacy and Solemnity to the Prayers, when delivered by them, than when they are read by private Persons without such Authority?

Does it become you, Sir, to strike in with such Careless, Loose and negligent Wretches, and to urge the same Objections in defence of your Superstition, as they are wont to do to Countenance their Profaneness?

Nothing,

Nothing, I see, comes amiss to you, that may any way serve your Turn, and you stick not to make use of any Enormity that will help to keep up the Dissenting Cause. Of this kind, is that Appeal to the People, Ask, say you, many Parishes in *England*, whether a most pious Liturgy is a competent supply for the want of an able, pious Minister? As if a pious Liturgy, and a Pious Minister were things inconsistent. And elsewhere you soothe the People, by putting into their Mouths that Canting Language, Oh! Don't think that to read to us those Words, that our Children can read every Day at home, &c. is enough to cure such dark, dead, disaffected Souls as ours, which are Words meerly contriv'd, *ad Captandum vulgum*, and plainly shew, what Game you are playing upon them.

But to make good this Charge of Laziness against the Conforming Clergy, you urge two or three things more, which must be consider'd. As first,

That the Gift of praying *Extempore*, is a necessary Qualification for the Ministerial Function, and should be the Test of Ordination. Next, that they who have this Gift are bound to Exercise it in their publick Ministrations, notwithstanding any Command to the contrary. Lastly,

The neglect of this Gift hath been the occasion of Loosness, Laziness, and other Immoralities. With what little appearance of Reason or Truth these things are affirm'd, must be shew'd in my next. I am

S I R,

Aug. 30th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I V .

To J. M.

S I R,

I Have been considering the heavy Charge of Loosness and Laziness which you put upon the use of Liturgies; and have in some measure shewed the Fallhood and Injustice of it.

However, to make it good, and to keep the Mind constantly employed, you make the Gift of Praying *Extempore*, a necessary Qualification of the Ministerial Function; and will scarce allow any to be fit or capable of Holy Orders, that want this Faculty, or forbear the use of it. For

You tell me in your first Letter, that you are perswaded, That the Almighty hath in this Age a great multitude of Suppliants, that can, and do express Holy Desires understandingly, orderly and aptly, without any penn'd or prescribed Forms, and that Ministers should be ordinarily able to do so. And a Brother of yours lays it down, That the Church should judge of the Ministers Gift of Prayer, before she trust

him with the publick Ministry. So Reason. Account, p. 13. that all that have not this Talent of

Variations, or forbear to use it in publick Worship, are but Usurpers of Holy Orders, and Intruders into the Ministers Office. Now had not this need to be well prov'd, that reflects so grossly upon all settled Churches, where never any such thing was ever made a Question or Qualification for Holy Orders? And yet that same Author tells us,

H

That

That if all Ministers in the constant use of their daily Prayers, cannot out-do the perfection and exactness of the best Compos'd Forms, it is to the shame of the Church of God in *England*. Now is it not a shame think you, for Men to own or utter such wild and extravagant Speeches?

But what is the Proof, that is offer'd for this bold Assertion? Why, nothing but that of *St. Paul to Timothy*. Neglect not the Gift of God that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery. In which yet there is not any of the least mention made of Prayer, and much less of performing it by any such Gift. In the Verse before, the Apostle wills him to give attendance to Reading, Exhortation and Doctrine; and in the Verse after, to meditate on these things: So that if you will needs have the Apostle there speak of Prayer, it must be rather of reading Compos'd Premeditated Forms, than pouring out New and *Extempore* Prayers.

The truth is, the Gift there intended by the Apostle, was the Ministerial Office or Function which was given to *Timothy*, by the laying on of Hands; and his willing him not to neglect it, was an Exhortation to a faithful and diligent Discharge of the Duty of his Place. But the Mischief is, some Men are so vainly conceited of this Talent, that where ever they find the word Gift mention'd in the Scripture, they will needs understand it of this Gift of Prayer. Hence some think they have found it in that Advice of *St. Paul*, *Having Gifts differing according to the Grace of God given to us, whether Prophecy, let us Prophecy according to the proportion*

Rom. 12. 6, 7.

portion of Faith, &c. In which the Apostle hath no Reference at all to it, for the Gifts he refers to, are particularly reckon'd up in the following Verses, where no such Gift of Prayer is either nam'd or implied; or if it were, could be meant only of that Supernatural Gift of Prayer, by which the publick Offices were at that time perform'd.

Others imagine they have found it in those words of *St. Peter, As* 1 Pet. 4. 10. *every one hath receiv'd the Gift, even so Minister the same one to another*; which Words are commonly interpreted of Alms, which the Apostle would have imparted as occasion should require: But cannot with any congruity of Sense have any Reference to Prayer, for the Apostle speaks there of *Ministring one to another*, whereas in Prayer, *He that Ministreth, Ministreth to God only, to whom alone our Prayers are directed.*

But if this Gift be not to be found in either of these places, they think James 1. 17. they cannot fail of it in that of *St. James, Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above*, and which Words being so general, they think must necessarily comprehend it. But if there were no appearance of any such Gift at that time, or since, why should we think that this must needs comprehend it? Besides, the Gifts mention'd by *St. James*, are good and perfect Gifts, and such as came down from above; whereas the Imperfections that attend your pretended Gift, and the many Evils that have proceeded from, and are still continued by it, shew it to have no Title to either. Yea, the Mischief done by this black Art of Variations, shews it came rather from the Fiends of Darkness than Father of Lights, with whom is no Variableness, neither shadow of Change.

However, these Men having strongly possess'd themselves with vain Imaginations of this Gift, think themselves bound to use it, not only without, but against the Authority of their Superiors; for one of them tells us, That this Gift is a Mean given by God for the performance of the Duty of Prayer, and therefore may not be omitted at the Command of Man; for they are required not to neglect, but to stir up the Gift of God that is in them, and are called upon daily to imploy and improve the Talent that is committed to them.

But is it a sinful neglect think you, of your own Gifts, at any time to make use of the Compositions of others in Divine Worship? And must all the Gifts we have, or imagine our selves to have, be constantly Exercis'd upon pain of being thought Idle and Lazy Persons?

Why then, as a Reverend Divine hath well observ'd, He that hath any Talent in Greek and Hebrew, may not use the Translation of the Bible drawn up by others, but must for the Exercise of his Gifts make a new Translation of his own, and vary it too, if he can, as oft as he hath occasion to quote it. Again, he that is able to gather the Articles of the Christian Faith into a brief Summary, may not make use of the Creed drawn up by others for that purpose, but must for the Exercise of his own Gifts be daily making of new Creeds.

Once more, he that hath any Talent in Poetry or Musick, must not make use of Psalms set to Musick or Meeter by others, but for the Exercise of his own Gifts, must be still making new Hymns of his own, and if he can, daily set them too to new Tunes. These things are every jot as necessary, upon the account of exercising Mens Gifts, as it is to lay aside the pious and well compos'd
Forms

Forms of others, and think themselves oblig'd to be daily making new Prayers of their own.

But the Preservation of any Gift or Faculty, say you, depends on the Exercise of it, and it must be extreamly prejudic'd and impair'd by Disuse.

Sir, There are Times and Occasions enough for the Exercise, and improving your Gifts, without affecting or making new Prayers, which are more hurtful than helpful to true Devotion: As for the Gift of Speech, which you still Mistake for the Gift of Prayer, that may well enough be preserv'd by daily Discourse and Conversation, especially if they are applyed to wise and useful Subjects; whereas the true and proper Gift of Prayer, is better preserv'd and improv'd too, by a devout and diligent Application of the Heart and Soul, to the known Words of a well-digested Form, than by the Study of new and varied Words in an *Extempore* Prayer.

But does not this set aside the Gifts of good Men in Prayer, to be thus confin'd to Forms? No, it only sets aside such Gifts as *Alexander* the Copper-smith boasted of in *St. Paul's* time, and Weavers and Cobblers have pretended to in ours: But it sets aside none of the Gifts of wise, godly, and authorized Persons, who find Work enough to employ their greatest Abilities to the Glory of God, and the good of the Church, in the Use of these Forms, which are enjoin'd for the Unity and Decency of publick Worship: And to tell you the Truth, the not setting aside the pretended Gifts of these gifted Brethren, by publick Authority, hath employed the Gifts of the best and ablest Persons, to lay them aside by Argument and Persuasion; to keep ignorant, bold, and unauthorized Persons, from foaming out their own Shame, to the great Scandal of Religion, Increase of Atheism, and Disorder

der of the whole Church of Christ. And if these do not prevail, 'tis time for Authority to work, lest they who would now be indulg'd as weak Brethren, do by that means, in a little time, grow too strong for their Masters.

But to carry on the Charge of Loosness and Laziness, you farther add, That the Neglect of using Mens Gifts in *Extempore*-Prayer, hath hinder'd them from studying the Scriptures and other good Books; that reading the Liturgy tempts them to lay the Reins upon the Neck of their voluptuous Inclinations, makes them waste their Time in Drinking, Sports and Recreations, and gives them Leisure to frequent Fairs, Markets, and Coffee-houses; &c.

Now here are a great many Bolts shot at Random, and serve only to shew the Badness of a Cause, that must be supported by such Calumnies.

As for what you say of the Liturgies hindring Men from the Study of the Scriptures, what a wild Accusation is this, when the Use of the Liturgy consists altogether in the reading of the Scriptures, and of devout Prayers compos'd by them, where all the Psalms of *David* are appointed to be read over every Month, the Scriptures of the Old Testament once, and of the New thrice a Year, beside what they may do in private at other times: And is this the way to hinder Men from studying and understanding the Scripture?

Sir, If you had studied and understood the Scriptures, as you ought, you might soon see the Baseness and Wickedness of such false Accusations.

As for what you say of Leisure for Fairs, Markets, and Coffee houses, there may be many just and necessary Occasions, that may call Men of all Professions to those Places; and this can be no fault in any, if they are not unnecessarily or unseasonably

bly frequented, much less, is this to be charg'd upon the Liturgy: For if you look abroad, you will find the Frequenters of Conventicles, as great Frequenters of those Places as any others.

As for what you say of a Liturgy's making Men lay the Reins upon the Neck of their voluptuous Inclinations, this is either a foul Calumny, or a Fallacy of *non Causa pro Causa*; for what is there in godly Forms that should lead Men to such Enormities? Or, what Evil can there be in that way in which all before you worshipped the God of our Fathers? No, Sir, those Vices proceed not from the publick Prayers, but from Mens private Designs and corrupt Appetites, which are but too visible and predominant in those you stile the Godly Party, who decry Forms of Prayer, and at the same time, place all their Religion in a Form of Godliness.

So that your Bolts, you see, are shot at Rovers, for they glance back and wound your selves as deeply as any others; and your heavy Charge of Loosness and Laziness on the use of the Liturgy, serves only to shew your Ignorance or Design, not the least Reason or Truth in the Accusation. But here you have something to say concerning the silencing of your painful Ministers, which shall be consider'd in my next. I am

S I R,

Sept. 4th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

H 4

L E T.

L E T T E R X V .

To J. M.

S I R,

HAVING vindicated the Liturgy from your foul and unjust Aspersions, and wiped off the Dirt you so liberally cast upon them that use it, 'twill be requisite to observe your high Encomiums of *Extempore-Prayer*, and the mighty Character you give of those that exercise their Talent this Way: For, how freely soever you calumniate the former as Idle Lazy Drones; the latter never fail of the glorious Titles of Able, Godly, and painful Ministers: And that because they will not dull their Parts with the same old Words of a Form, but daily labour for new Expressions, and entertain their Hearers with grateful Varieties.

And is it fit, say you, that the Mouths of such painful Men should be stopp'd? Yes, when they take pains to so bad purpose, and their grateful Varieties of Prayers, lead only to an ungrateful Variety of Sects and Opinions. When they open their Mouths, to the reviling and rending the Church, and undermining the Government under which they live, 'tis but fit and necessary they should be stopp'd.

We undermine the Government! I would have you to know, say you, That we adhere to King *William*, and highly value his Government, and take our selves to be a true valuable part of it: [But mark what follows;] tho' there be some Orders of it that we cannot think good, nor conform to.

Now,

Now, what are these Orders? Why those public Prayers of the Church that were compil'd by our first Reformers, and enjoin'd by all Protestant Princes and Parliaments ever since, and confirm'd likewise by the Authority and Practice of the present King; and yet you cannot think them good, and will not conform to them. So that you like King *William's* Government, just as you did theirs who went before him; that is, you will obey what you please, and conform only to what you have a mind to: Which is just as when there was no King in *Israel*, to do only what is right in your own eyes. And are they not excellent Subjects think you, and great Lovers of the Government, that set up their own weak, or rather wilful Judgments above all the Wisdom and Authority of their Superiors, and seek by a few fulsom, flattering Commendations, to atone for the Contempt and Disobedience of the Laws? 'Tis not forgotten, Sir, how you applauded King *James's* Government, and concurr'd with him in taking away the Penal Laws and Test, which would have undermin'd the Reformation, and brought in all those Evils which wise and good Men saw just Reason to fear: And if you had any Modesty left, this might stop your Mouths from calling those Jacobites and Popishly affected, who wisely foresaw and prevented those Miseries, which your corrupt Designs and intemperate Zeal would have brought upon us.

The Truth is, you can like any King or no King, as it best serves your Purposes; and are so vainly conceited of your own Worth and Wisdom, that none is fit to govern or prescribe to you but your selves. If Governors say and do as you would have them, that is, if they give any Countenance to your Divisions, you can then
 speak

ſpeak up for them, they ſhall be no leſs than the Glory of *Chriſtendom*, and the Healers of all our Breaches: But if they ſhew their Diſlike to your Schiſms and Conventicles, which have been cenſur'd by all Governments, and condemned by all your own Brethren that have gone before you, then your Tongues are turn'd, and we hear of nothing but Impoſitions and Perſecution.

Indeed, your Praises and Diſpraises are deſign'd for tacit Directions, what you would have done, and both are founded on ſo ill a Bottom, that it deſerves little regard on whom you beſtow either the one or the other.

But we were ſilenc'd, ſay you, not for reſuſing a Liturgy, for the Commiſſioners at the *Savoy* never ſpoke a Word againſt a Liturgy or ſet Forms of Prayer, but only of Emendations and Additions of ſeveral Forms, with a Liberty of uſing one or the other.

Is not this a plain Proof of what was juſt before affirm'd? You are not againſt a Liturgy, but you muſt have ſuch a one as you pleaſe; it muſt be altered and amended as you will have it, and when that is done, you muſt have one of your own making to be ſet up by its ſide, with a Liberty of uſing one or the other. Who now, muſt be the Judge or Governor in this Caſe? Or whoſe Will muſt carry it, either they to whom the Care of the Church is committed, or they who are ſubjected to their Rule and Governance? The former thinks fit to continue and eſtabliſh the Ancient Liturgy, which is conſonant to, and compos'd by the Ancient Models of the Chriſtian Church: Whereas you will needs have this laid aſide, or one of a new or different Make ſet up in Oppoſition to it: Now which, think you, ought in Reaſon to take place? If you knew but your
own

own Place, and obeyed them that have the Rule over you in the Lord, it would be no Question, but instead of that, you must have your own New-fangl'd Liturgy; or else you are resolv'd to be as factious and troublesome as you can: And if the Government will not submit to you, and give you your own way, you care not what Evils or Confusion come of it. Will you never mortifie this notorious and intolerable Pride?

But you ask, What will Posterity say or think, when they hear or read of the silencing of so many godly and painful Ministers? Why, the same that our Predecessors always did; who thought it fit and necessary, to silence all such as would not submit to the Constitution and good Orders of the Church: Your Friend Mr. *Beza*, who was often consulted in his Time, about these Matters, was clearly for silencing Ministers in such Cases; as you may find him cited at large, by the Reverend Bishop of *Worcester*. And all Christian Churches have ever done the same to this Day; and 'tis no more than what our Saviour would have done to those that will not hearken to the Church: Yea, Posterity would have reckon'd it a great Blot upon the present Age, if it had continued those in publick Ministrations of the Church, who refuse to conform to the Offices and good Orders of it.

Unreaf. of Separat. p. 21, 22.

But these Men, say you, were not silenc'd for any Irregularities, Insufficiency, or Immoralities, as some have formerly been.

Sir, They were silenc'd for as great, if not greater Enormities than these; 'twas for their Refractoriness to Government, and Disobedience to Laws made for Order and Unity, which are greater Evils, and have a more pernicious Influence upon the publick than particular Mens private Immo-

Immoralities. Yea, to tell you the Truth, things were then at that pass, that they were telling of Noses, and counting their Numbers, to see whether their Party could not over-balance the Government, and force it to a Compliance with them : And their frequent Boastings of their Numbers ever since, and their daily Endeavours to seduce the People to increase their Party, plainly shew what they are still driving at, and may be a warning to Authority, to have a watchful Eye over them, to prevent their Designs : Their Principles of Government are loose, and their Obedience to it is much looser ; and tho' the growing Evils of Atheism and Deism call for our united Prayers and Endeavours to withstand them, yet these Men can easily over-look these things, to serve their other Purposes. But,

To shew the Hardship of their silencing, you rub up some of the old threadbare Objections of Mr. *Baxter's*, against the Liturgy, which have been so often and so thoroughly answered, that 'tis a Wonder how you can have the Face to mention them any more, as against the Calendar, which contains wholsom Directions for Reading the Holy Scriptures, through the whole Course of the Year : Against the Rule for finding out *Easter*, which depending upon the various Course of the Moon, can scarce be reduc'd to greater Certainty ; and one would think, you should like this well enough, if it were but for the sake of its Variation ; against the Rubrick, the Translation of the Psalms, some Expressions in *Athanasius's* Creed, and other Offices of the Church ; all which, are so agreeable to the Sense and Doctrine of Antiquity, that no wise and well-meaning Person need entertain any Scruples about them.

Indeed,

Indeed, there never was, or can be, any thing so well-devised by the Wit of Man, but what in time, some evil Spirits will find something to carp and cavil at; we find the Holy Scriptures themselves, can scarce escape the Lash and Censure of some Men: And if the Enemies of our Liturgy, ever since the first hatching of Separation, could find no greater Flaws in it than those you mention, there is greater Cause to admire its Excellency, than to cavil at its Imperfection. So that upon the whole, nothing you alledge can justifie your Separation, or give any just Cause to complain of your silencing. But when I ask'd, if these Men were so justly silenc'd, how came they to speak again, and in Conventicles too, which they themselves had spoken so much against? You have something to say in Answer to it, which shall be consider'd in my next.

I am

S I R,

Sept. 7th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T-

L E T T E R X V I.

S I R,

I Shew'd you in my last, what just Reason there was for Silencing your able and painful Ministers, that refus'd to conform to the Laws both of Church and State. I come now to consider, whether the Persons thus Silenced, may and ought to open their Mouths again in the Publick Exercise of the Ministry, without, and against the Consent and Authority of your Lawful Superiors?

The Negative whereof being asserted in a former Letter, I shall in this shew the weakness of what you urge in Answer to it.

First, Laying down this for the Ground-work, That to Preach in any settled Church, without, or against the Authority of Superiors, is repugnant, not only to the Subjection we owe to them, but likewise to all those Laws of God, that require Peace, Order, Unity and Discipline in his Church; for 'tis utterly impossible, That all, or any of these things should be kept up, if every one may gather a Congregation, and Officiate where he pleases, against the known Establish'd Laws both of Church and State. God is not the Author of Confusion, saith *St. Paul*, but of Peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints, *1 Cor.* 14. 32, 33. And therefore wills, That the Spirits of the Prophets should be subject to the Prophets, implying, That Inferior Ministers should be subject to their Superiors, that so, Order, Peace and Discipline may be preserv'd.

Indeed,

(III)

Indeed, where there is no true Church, nor any legal Ministers duly settled, there Necessity and Charity will give great Allowances; But for any to thrust himself into anothers Charge, and Officiate there against the Consent of the Lawful Pastor, is not only to be a Busy-body in other Men's Matters, but to be a Troubler of the Church, and a Sower of Sedition: For this must unavoidably breed Jealousies, Sideings and Divisions; the People in such Cases naturally falling into Comparisons between Teachers; and as in the Church of *Corinth*, one was for *Paul*, another for *Apollos*, and a third for *Cephas*, *1 Cor. 1. 12.* So one will be for this Teacher, another for that, and a third for neither, and so will be for heaping to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, by which means they will come not to endure sound Doctrine, but will turn away their Ears from the Truth, and be turned unto Fables, *1 Tim 4 3, 4.* The truth of this our own woful Experience may too sadly verifie. And therefore,

We find the Old Non-conformists were utterly against the Preaching of such Ministers as were Silenced by the Established Laws; For when the Brownists, who were legally Silenced, first began the Separation by drawing the People into private Meetings, they were highly blamed, and written against, by the Old Non-conformists, as you may see at large in the Bishop of *Worcester's* Unreasonableness of Separation, *pag. 82, 83.*

And when *Beza* was consulted in this Point, he plainly declar'd the utter unlawfulness of keeping separate Meetings, and Preaching without, or against the Establish'd Laws, dreading and detesting, as he tells us, the many sad and doleful Consequences of such Practices. As you may find him quoted by the same Author, *pag. 21. 22.* So that
the

the Dissenters of our Days are clearly gone off from the peaceable Principles of the Old Non-conformists, and are fallen into that rigid and wilful Separation which they so severely condemned.

But because Mr. *Baxter*, the great Ring-leader of this high flown Separation, hath something to say, for Silenc'd Ministers keeping Separate Meetings, and Preaching without, and against the Laws, which you have transcrib'd from him; 'twill be requisite to take some Notice of it, and what I shall Animadvert upon it, will serve for an Answer to both. And here, you

First, Urge some places of Scripture, as our Saviour's Commission to his Apostles, to *Go, and teach all Nations*, promising to be with them to the end of the World, *Matth. 28. 19.* And St. *Paul's*, *Wo be to me, if I preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 16. But to how bad Purposes these are applied to your Case, will be obvious to any that will consider the different State of things in the Apostles, and our Days. For the Apostles lived under Heathen Governors, who forbade them to speak in the Name of Christ, and required them to stifle that Message which they had in Charge to deliver, and therefore might well ask the Question, whether it were not more fit to *Obeey God rather than Man*? Whereas, Thanks be to God we live under Christian Princes, who not only embrace the Christian Religion themselves, but guard it with good Laws, to propagate its Doctrine, and preserve its Peace and Unity.

Again, the Apostles received not their Calling and Authority from Men, or by the Hands of Men, but immediately from Christ himself, and therefore might not be restrained, or be deposed by Men.

Whereas,

Whereas, we (tho' we Execute a Function whereof God is the Author, and are also called of God to it, yet we) are called and ordain'd by the Hands and Ministry of Men, and may therefore by the Ministry of Men be depofed and restrain'd from the Exercife of it.

Hence we find the Old Non-conformifts declaring, That whilst the Bifhops fufpend and deprive according to the Laws of the Land, fo long we account their Action therein as an Act of the Church, which we muft and ought to Reverence and yield Obedience to; and if it be faid, The Church is not to be obey'd, when it Deprives or Sufpends for fuch Caufes, as we in our Confciencces know to be insufficient: They answer, That it lieth in them to Depofe, who may Ordain, and they may Shut, that may Open, or elfe there could be no Proceedings againft any Guilty Perfon that depraves the Doctrin, or difturbs the Peace of the Church, who will always think or pretend themfelves guiltlefs.

Furthermore, the Apoftles had fuch an immediate Guidance and Affiftance of the Holy Ghof, as led them into all Truth, fo that they could not err in the delivery of their Message, whereas we cannot now without Vanity pretend to any fuch immediate Affiftances; or if we fhould, daily Experience would apparently confute it; Men frequently falling into thofe Errors, both in Opinion and Practice, that make it neceffary to refrain them.

Thefe things well confider'd, plainly fhew the Difference between the Apoftles Cafe and ours, in refpect of the publick Exercife of the Ministry; which is fo manifef, That *St. Paul's Wo be to me, if I Preach not the Gofpel*, might be fometimes inverted into, *Wo be to the Gofpel*, if Preached by fuch Men.

But 'tis Sacrilege, say you, to alienate Consecrated Persons from the Work to which they are ordain'd.

Sir, If any Consecrated Persons will alienate themselves from their proper Work, through their own Default, at whose Door must the Sacrilege lie? Do they not rob God and the Church too, of the Service they owe to both, by rendring themselves unfit or incapable of performing it? And may not Hereticks, Schismatics, and other notorious Offenders be depriv'd or restrain'd from the Exercise of the Ministry, for fear of Desecrating such Holy Men?

But the Notorious Necessities of the People, say you, many of which are in danger of perishing through Ignorance, Sensuality and Debauchery, call for our Assistance.

Sir, There are Regular and Well-qualified Men enough in the Church of *England*, to instruct the People in all things necessary to their Salvation; and Thanks be to God, there is no want of such as are both able and willing to do so; our Churches are all open, where the Fundamentals of Religion are plainly unfolded, the Rules of a good Life earnestly press'd, and the Danger of Debauchery, and all vicious Courses fully represented. And 'tis not less than a Calumny, and manifest Untruth to insinuate, That any are in danger of Perishing for lack of Knowledge. The greatest Mischief is, from your Evil Arts of seducing and drawing the People from those places where these things are clearly set before them. And the Atheism, Debauchery, and other Evils you complain of, are evidently occasion'd by your Separation; for when Men discover the Fraud and Falshood of your vain Pretences, they begin to suspect the Truth of Religion it self, and are thence led to throw off all.

Besides,

Besides, if you would Preach where there is most need, you should repair to those Places, where the Gospel is not yet planted, and scatter your Light in some of the dark Corners of the Earth: But instead of that, you are for Exercising your Talent, not where is the greatest need of Instruction, but where you may reap the greatest benefit by Division.

But you add, *That the People have as true a Right to their Souls, as we have to our Tithes; and an Atheistical Popish Prince or Patron, can no more impose a Minister upon them, than he can chuse Wives, Diet, Physick, and force them to take them.* And

In another Letter, you say, *That for above a Thousand Years after Christ, he was to be taken for no Bishop that was chosen by the Magistrate without the Clergy's Election, and the Peoples choice and consent.*

Now, to set you right in this Matter: 'Tis granted, That Bishops formerly were, and still are Elected by the Clergy, at which, in ancient Times, some of the People were present to give their Testimony concerning their Lives and Conversation: Which Practice was grounded on that of the Apostles, *1 Tim. 3. 2, 7. A Bishop must be Blameless, and of good Report:* But in process of Time, the People from the bare giving Testimony, put in their Claim to their Consent in the Election. And this begat those Disturbances, Factions and Troubles in the Church, that occasion'd the settling this Matter by Laws and Canons. The Nomination of Bishops being settled in the Emperors, and the Donation of Churches, in such as erected or endow'd them; by which means, Peace was restor'd to the Church, and that liberal

Provision made for it, which to this Day, it in some measure Enjoys.

Now Mr. *Baxter*, and his Followers, to gratifie the People, and disturb the Church, would fain renew this Quarrel, and revive those popular Pretences to choosing their Ministers, which occasion'd so many and great Disturbances.

Of this kind is your arguing from Men's choosing their Wives, Diet, &c. in which they have a natural Right for their own private Peace and Comfort, to their choosing of Bishops and Doctors, in which the publick Peace and Welfare of the Church are so much concern'd: Between which, as there is a great Difference, so to argue from one to the other, is a manifest Inconsequence.

But I must not forget a famous Argument of yours, for Preaching without, or against Laws, and that is taken from a certain Church-relation which you say, there was between Pastor and People, which the *Bartholomew* Act was not able to dissolve.

Where, Sir, do you read of any such indissoluble Relation? Who hath ty'd this *Gordian* Knot between Pastor and People so fast, that no Power upon Earth is able to unty it? Or where has God so firmly join'd them together, that no Man may put them asunder?

The nearest, and closest Relation that we know of, is that between Husband and Wife; and yet, that admits of a Divorce, and may be dissolved in case of Adultery; and is this Covenant and Relation between Minister and People, the only sacred and inviolable Bond that cannot be broken? Are they so inseparably link'd together, that nothing can part them? May a Minister Preach Heresie, Schism,

Schism, Blasphemy, or Sedition, and yet must not be Silenc'd or remov'd from his Beloved, or rather Seduc'd People?

Certainly this is a new Covenant of a very late invention, and like the *Scottish* Covenant, set up against all Lawful Authority, which it manifestly tends to subvert and destroy.

But 'tis time to consider what you have further to say concerning the Pharisees, which shall be done in my next. I am

S I R,

Sept. 16th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

LETTER XVII.

To J. M.

S I R,

IN your Reply to my Letter concerning the Pharisees, to let pass some trifling Observations, about the Order of the Letters, about Holy Mr. *Baxter*, and about Pluralists and Non-residents, which are nothing to our purpose: Your main Objection is, that I left the Account of the Pharisees imperfect, and therefore you have thought fit to add some further Strokes to compleat the Character: And though you will not (you say) make any Application, yet half an Eye may see, against whom they are levelled.

First, Then for the Name, you are unwilling to have it deriv'd from *שֶׁדִּי* which signifies to Separate, lest you should be found too like them for your Separation: But you would have it come from *שֶׁדִּי* which signifies to Expound and Interpret, because they were great Expositors of the

Law; but that it comes not thence, is evident. because as Dr. *Lightfoot* observes, there were Women Pharisees, who were no more allow'd to

Teach and Expound the Law under the Old Testament, than they are to Preach or Expound the Gospel under the New; but if you derive it from the

the former Sense of the Word, there are Women Pharisees still, who are the chief Instruments and Supports of the Separation, and though they are but weaker Vessels in the Church, are yet the main Props and Pillars of the Conventicle.

Secondly, You own the Pharisees to be a Sect, but withal add, That it was the most prevalent one; for the Pharisees (say you) were the Rulers of the Church, and the chief Members of the Sanhedrim. This is levell'd against the Church as if it were only a prevailing Sect or Faction. But, Sir,

Is it not your great Ambition to be uppermost, and your great Uneasiness that 'tis otherwise? May we not see a greedy thirst and affectation of Power in some Men, who use all their Arts, and spare no Pains to arrive to it? And is not what they Malign and Envy in their Betters, the Object of their own Hopes and Expectations?

Thirdly, You own it to be not only a Sect, but the strict Sect of the Pharisees, for they pretended (say you) to greater strictness, than others: And is not this the Artifice, by which you seduce the unwary Vulgar, affecting a grave starch'd Sequestration from the Civil Society of other Men, as if they were only Men of the Earth, and not fit for the Conversation of such Heavenly Persons? Yea, though our Saviour shew'd himself marvellously sociable and conversable with all Mankind; yet you Quote two places from *St. Paul*, to countenance your morose Distance.

The one is, to *Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness*, Ephes. 5. 11. which forbids only a Fellowship with the Vices, not with the Persons of Men; the o-

ther is, *Not to eat with Whoremongers*
 1 Cor. 5. 11. *and Adulterers*, which is only a Caution against a too great and unnecessary Intimacy and Familiarity with such Persons, which all wise Men do advise against. But you go on.

4thly, To describe the Pharisees, that they endeavour'd to stretch others to their Size: That they separated from all others, but none must separate from them: This is another Arrow shot at the Church, not considering how it glances back, and wounds your own selves; for did not some Men not long since, labour hard to stretch others, to their new fangled Doctrine and Discipline? And though they not only separated from, but destroy'd the Establish'd Church, yet none were to separate from them, as appear'd by their bitter Invectives against Separation, of which you shall have a larger Account, when you think fit to call it in Question. Moreover,

5thly, The Pharisees (say you) distinguish'd themselves from others, by their Garments; And such too as signified a special Purity.

This is a Fling at the Surplice, for its being us'd as a distinguishing Garb: But Sir, are not Judges and Magistrates in the Execution of their Office, distinguish'd from others by their Robes and Habits? And are the sacred Offices of Religion, the only things that must be stripp'd naked, and divested of all decent Solemnity? The Pharisees Fault was, to place Holiness and Purity in them; and yours is, to fasten Unholiness and Impurity upon them. But you go on,

6thly,

6thly. The Pharisees were a proud domineering Generation, ever gaping for Preferments, and aspiring after the highest Places and Titles; to be called *Rabbi*, and Lord it over the Faith and Consciences of their Brethren.

This is a sting at the Bishops, for being call'd Lords; you had them before by the Lawn-Sleeves, and here you fall foul upon their Titles, that with the Pharisees they are not only for enlarging their Philacteries, but with them too, they must be call'd *Rabbi*, and Lord it over God's Heritage. But, Sir,

Is all Superiority, in Place or Office, to be stil'd domineering? Is it impossible for any to be above others, without trampling upon all beneath them? Does not all Government require a Subordination? And what Order can be kept, if all Men stand upon the same Level? Must Pride, think you, necessarily lurk under a Distinction of Habits and Titles? Nay, do not some, with *Diogenes*, trample upon the Pride of others, with far greater Pride of their own?

This is too notorious to be deny'd; yea, does not your judging and censuring your Superiors imply an imaginary Superiority over them, and set you, in your own vain Conceit above them, as if they poor Souls! were all out of the way; and you want nothing but Place and Power to set them all right? What think you, is not this insufferable Pride and Insolence? And yet you add, That you should be sorry, if the Non conformists should do so.

Sir, That they have done so, and far worse things, too many have to their Sorrow found; who have groan'd under the Weight of their
insult-

insulting Power, and felt the little Finger of Presbytery heavier than the Loins of Episcopacy. Furthermore,

7thly, When I told you of the false Glosses of the Pharisees, you own them to be loose Expositors of the Law, and give an Instance of it, in their not making it to extend to the Internals of Religion, but to reach only the Outward Man, and to rest in the External Observance of your Ceremonies and Traditions.

This is intended for a Fling to the Ceremonies, as mere outside formal things, that are inconsistent with the inward Life and Power of Godliness. But,

Sir, Is the Worship of God to be perform'd without any Ceremonies? If not, is it not much more comely, to behold Men joining and agreeing together in the same humble Postures of Devotion, than to see them clash and using different Words and Gestures? Does not the Decency and Order requir'd by the Apostles, chiefly respect these things? Does not an Uniform and Regular way of serving God, add a Grace and Solemnity to Divine Worship? And is it not much better to serve him in the Beauty, than Deformity of Holiness?

The Pharisees Fault here again, was, to observe their Ceremonies and Traditions, with an Opinion of Holiness and Necessity, to look upon them as things as much commanded by God, as the great and weightier Matters of the Law: And yours likewise is to abstain from innocent Ceremonies, with an Opinion of Sinfulness in them, and to esteem them as things as much forbidden, as the greatest Breaches and Violations of God's Law. Now this is Superstition both ways, and 'tis as much Will-worship in you, to say eat
not,

not, taste not, handle not the Holy Sacrament kneeling ; as it was in the Pharisees to say, eat not, taste not, handle not God's Creatures with unwashen Hands.

Whereas the Church of *England*, looking on these Ceremonies, as merely indifferent and alterable Circumstances of publick Worship, as you may see at large in the Preface before the Common-prayer ; and appointing them only for external Order and Decency, hath carefully avoided the Superstition of both.

And yet to keep up your Party, you tell the People, that we make them necessary and essential Parts of Worship ; and that you abstain from them for the same Reason that Christ and his Apostles abstain'd from the Ceremonies and Traditions of the Pharisees, because we place Holiness and Religion in them.

This, Sir, is very foul play, at once to traduce the Church, and seduce the People ; but to carry on your own Designs, you care not what false Game you play, or by what evil Arts and Accusations you compass them. But you go on and say,

The Pharisees impos'd their Traditions and Ceremonies as Laws, on Christ's Dissenting Disciples, and were ever accusing and complaining of those, that would not observe them.

Here, after you had Aspers'd the Church, you come to claw and flatter the Dissenters, by seeking to draw in Christ and his Disciples into the Number of them, and would make them as much Non-conformists and Separatists from the Jewish Church, as you are from the Church of *England* : But with how little Truth and Sincerity this is affirm'd, we may easily learn from the History of the Four Evangelists ; where we read, That
Christ

Christ and his Apostles liv'd in the Communion, and comply'd with the Ceremonies and Customs of the Jewish Church, from which the Pharisees were but a Sect, or Excrecence.

As for our Blessed Saviour, he was by Birth and Circumcision a Member of the Church of the Jews, in both which Senses, he is said to
Gal. 4. 4. be *made under the Law*: And being thereby a Debtor to keep the whole Law, he accordingly paid an exact Duty and Conformity to it.

In his Infancy, he was not only circumcis'd the Eighth Day, according to the Law given to *Abraham*, but was soon after presented in the Temple, and his Mother purified, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses's* Law.

When he was grown up, we read that he frequented the Synagogues of the Jews every Sabbath Day: For St. *Luke* tells us, That as his
Luke 4. 16. Custom was, *he went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and stood up for to read.* Upon

which Words, a very Learned Author tells us, That 'twas his constant Custom to go to that Synagogue of
Dr. Lightfoot, vol. 1. page 1040. *Nazareth*, as his Parish Church, every Sabbath Day; where he sometimes read him-

self, and withal, join'd with the Congregation as a Member of it, in the other Parts of the Divine Service, adding, That he punctually observ'd all the Rites and Ceremonies of the Synagogue Worship: Yea, though the People of *Nazareth* were none of the best, as appears by that proverbial Speech, *Can any Good come out of Nazareth?* Yet he made no Separation, but continued a Member with them, till the Fear of his Life, and other Business of his Function call'd him thence: In his
depart-

departing thence, having heal'd a Leper of a dangerous Leprosie, he bid him *go and shew himself to the Priest, and offer the Gift due by the Law of Moses, upon such occasions.* Matth. 8. 4.

But to shew the exact Conformity of Christ and his Apostles to the Jewish Church; we must note, That God Almighty appointed three great and memorable Feasts, *viz.* the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, to be observ'd of all the Members of that Church: And lest they should think it sufficient to do it by themselves at home, in the particular Places of their abode, they were commanded to repair to *Jerusalem*, and that not severally and at different times, but to go up at the same times, and meet there together at the Celebration of those great Festivals, which was done to tie them the faster together in one Communion.

Now the Evangelists frequently acquaint us, with Christ's resorting to those Feasts: And the forecited Learned Author, after his recounting some of the many Ceremonies us'd at them, tells us, That Our Blessed Saviour was a punctual Observer of them all: And of the Apostles we read, that *They were continually in the Temple, Blessing and Praising God*, Luke 24. 53.

Again, we find our Saviour present at the Feast of the Dedication: And we read of the Feast of *Purim*, which were not of God's immediate Appointment, as the three former, but injoyn'd by Civil and Ecclesiastical Governors, in their several Ages.

In short, we find Our Lord, in the Night in which he was Betrayed, taking the Passover with his Disciples, and observing the Rites of it, *Matth.* 26. 19, 20. So that 'tis plain, that he both Liv'd and

and Dyed in constant Communion with the Jewish Church.

After his Resurrection, when he had fulfilled all Righteousness, and all the Types and Prophecies of the Old Law were accomplish'd in him, by which he abundantly shew'd himself the true promis'd Messiah; he put an end to the Jewish Oeconomy, and Instituted the Christian Church, which he gave a Commission to his Apostles to plant and propagate every where, and furnish'd them with extraordinary Assistances and Gifts of the Holy Ghost to that end.

And this is that one Catholick Church, or Body of Christ, which Himself and his Apostles, would have kept entire without any Schism or Division in it: To which end, they have left a strict Charge upon all the Members of it, to *Keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*. which can only be by joyning together in one Fellowship and Communion. And now what think you, Sir, are Christ and his Apostles, to be reckon'd in the Number of Dissenters and Non-conformists? Nay, have they not left an Example of strict Conformity to the Jewish Church, of which they were Members; and shew'd an exact Compliance with all the Rights and Ceremonies, not only of Divine, but Humane and Ecclesiastical appointment us'd in it? And will our Saviour think you approve of Rents and Divisions in the Christian Church, which he hath us'd his own Body, upon the account of these things? No certainly, the Precepts to Unity, and the Prohibition of Divisions are far more urgent under the Gospel, than ever they were under the Law: And how can you conceive Schism and Separation to be signs of Grace and purer Christianity, when they are

so directly contrary to the Rules and Precepts of both?

Thus you see, Sir, that your additional Stroaks serve but to add to the Resemblance, and your compleating the Character of the Pharisees, only shews you the more compleatly like them.

But you have something farther to say of the Pharisees Prayers, and ask, Whether they were by a Liturgy or not? Which must be examin'd and answered in my next. I am

S I R,

Yours,

M. H.

L E T-

LETTER XVIII.

To J. M.

S I R,

I Shew'd in my last, that the additional Stroaks, you gave to the Picture of the Pharisees, did but encrease the Resemblance, and what you added to compleat their Character, serv'd only to make it look so much the harder upon you: I proceed in this to consider what you have farther to say concerning your Prayers; and here, when I told, That the Pharisees Prayers were remarkable for two Things, *viz.* their length and their loudness, you very fairly quarrel with both; for your cavilling Humour will scarce let any thing pass: And therefore something must be added for the Illustration of both.

As for their length, Our Saviour Matt. 23. 14. hath recorded it for a piece of their Hypocrisy, that they made long Prayers: No, (say you) 'twas not the length of their Prayers, but the making of them for a Pretence, that is there blam'd.

But, Sir, Did not the making of them for a pretence, imply an Opinion of some greater Excellency in them, than in shorter Prayers? Men are not wont to pretend to, but hide Imperfections; and if the Pharisees made these Prayers for a Shew or Pretence, 'tis a sign they took Prolixity for a Perfection and Ornament of their Devotion, and plac'd greater Holiness and Sanctity in them; that they had a value for long Prayers,

and

and valu'd themselves upon them, which was the thing I observed in them.

As for their Lowdness, we read, That they pray'd in the Corners of the Street, which being done for Ostentation and Vanity, and before great Concourses of People, Lowdness was necessary to attain their Ends; and therefore as they sounded a Trumpet before their Alms, that they might be seen of Men, so they lifted up their Voices like a Trumpet in their Street-prayers, to be heard of them.

But whatever becomes of the Lowdness, you cannot away with blaming the length of Prayers; For was not *Jacob's*, say you, a long Prayer? Yea, was not *David's*, *Solomon's*, *Nehemiah's* and *Daniel's* so?

Sir, There are far more Examples of short, than of long Prayers in Holy Scripture, and we read of much greater Successes to have attended the one than the other: As for the Prayers you mention, the first of them, was but like one of our short Collects, the other like our longer Forms, Compos'd for publick Fasts and Thankgivings; but none of them like the tedious long-winded Harangues of *Extempore* Prayer; besides, the former being the inspir'd Prayers of the Prophets, and Dedicated by the Spirit of God upon some Solemn Occasions, were both for Matter, and Words, sound, pertinent and pithy. Whereas yours, proceeding from the sudden and hasty Conceptions of your own Brain, are far from either, being oftentimes full of Impertinences, Tautologies and Unsoundness. But was not the Lord's a long Prayer (say you) when he continued all Night at it? And the Primitive Christians spent sometimes many hours together in Prayer; and some of their Fasts

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were Celebrated with Prayers, prolong'd from the Morning of one Day, to the beginning of another.

Sir, 'Tis a great Mistake to think, that they spent all this time in Verbal or Vocal Prayer, or that they were all this while speaking and uttering Words unto God: No, a great part of this time was taken up in silent, and devout Soliloquies, in Pious, and Heavenly Meditations, and the inward breathings of Mental Prayer, which were very frequent, and made up a great part of the Devotion of those Times.

As for our Saviour's continuing all Night in Prayer, much of that time was doubtless spent in the secret Elevations of the Heart; for we read of no other Words utter'd by him all that time, but *O my Father! if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not my Will, but thine be done.* The Disciples were so far from joining with him, that they slept away the greatest part of the Night; however, having utter'd these Words once, he awoke them, and pray'd again the second time, *O my Father, if this Cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy Will be done:* After which he pray'd again the third time without any variation, saying the same Words: And with these few unvaried Words, together with many inward Sighs, and Groans, that cannot be utter'd, he past that Night before his Sufferings with great Devotion, and hereunto the Apostle alludes, when he tells us of Christ's praying to his Father with strong Cries and Tears. Besides, Our Saviour having blam'd the Heathens for their much speaking, and the Pharisees for their long Prayers, he was careful not to leave behind him an Example or Encouragement of either.

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As for what you say of the Primitive Christians spending many Hours, and sometime whole Nights in Prayer and Fasting; you must not think, that this was always done with the Voice or the Use of Words; for the ancient Fathers tell us, That a great part of their Service was perform'd *μετὰ σιγῆς*, with Silence, that is, with the inward Motions and Desires of Mental Prayer, which are oftentimes more acceptable with God, than the greatest multitude or variety of Words.

But you would have me tell you, whether the Pharisees long Prayers were by a Liturgy, or no? And if not, where is the Jewish Service, that Christ and his Apostles frequented? Adding, That you believe we should find in those Days no other Common-Prayer-Book, but the Bible.

Sir, That the National Church of the Jews, had a publick Service, that was us'd in the Temple, and the Synagogues, is so plainly and fully prov'd by the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot*, that I shall need only to refer you to him: Where you may read some of the set Forms that Compos'd their Liturgy, together with the Order and Method of their whole Service, collected from the best and ancientest of the Jewish Writers. There you may learn likewise, that the Religion of the Pharisees and Sadducees was not the National Religion of the Jews, in which Christ, and his Apostles join'd, but Sects and Excrescences from it, and being such, we find our Saviour often reprov-ing, but never communicating with them: And yet you will believe, that in those Days there was no other Common-Prayer-Book, but the Bible, that is, you will believe against all the Sense and Reason of the wisest Men, and steer your Course against the stream of all Antiquity

But nothing sticks so much in your Stomach, as charging the Pharisees with vain Babbling, and you will never have done with repeating their vain Repetitions. What the Mystery of this should be is somewhat hard to guess, unless it be, That your Prayers being charg'd with the same fault, if you can clear the Pharisees Prayers from this Imputation, it may help to free yours from it, and set them off the better.

But let these take care (say you) how they reflect on the Pharisees, who, in a Morning Service do, five or six times repeat the Lord's Prayer, and do so often cry, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, repeating, *Good Lord deliver us*, seven or eight times in the Litany, and *We beseech thee to hear us good Lord*, one and twenty times.

Sir, Is the frequent repeating the Lord's Prayer, which is the Pattern and Perfection of all our Prayers to be accounted vain Repetitions; especially being us'd only upon different accounts and occasions, as you may see in the Page 56. Pious, and Learned Meditations of

Dr. Comber; who asks, how we can too often join his perfect Prayer to ours, that are so imperfect, since by him alone, both we and our Prayers become acceptable? Again, is all Affectionate repeating, think you, of the same Words, to be thought vain Repetitions? Is *David's* repeating, *His Mercy endureth for ever*, thirty six times in one Psalm to be accounted such? Or is Our Saviour's saying the same Words three times in his Agony, to be reckon'd in that number? No certainly, he that blam'd this fault in others, would not be guilty of it himself. For the clearing then of this Matter, I must shew you what are not vain Repetitions, and likewise what are

are such, that you may the better distinguish the one from the other. And

First, To repeat the same Words out of a deep Sense of what we have receiv'd, and ardent Desires of what we ask at God's Hand, is no vain Repetition; thus the Psalmist feeling an inward Joy in God's Mercy, and repeating it upon several Occasions was far from being vain: And much less was Our Saviour's saying the same Words, from a strong Desire of being heard, to be esteem'd such: Thus the doubling, and trebling our Petitions for Mercy with Earnestness and Affection is no vain Repetition: And yet this *Lord have Mercy upon us*, is never put up but three times together, which is a particular Address to each of the Persons in the Holy Trinity; and our putting up one and the same Petition thrice, denotes our praying to three Persons, and one God, and I hope you will not think this a vain Repetition.

Again, the same Words, when apply'd to different and fresh Matter, is no vain Repetition; thus that Form of Deprecation, *Good Lord deliver us*, which you say is repeated six or seven times in the Litany, might look like a vain Repetition, if it were every time apply'd to one and the same thing; but being still join'd to new Matter, that is, some different Sin or Calamity, from which we pray to be deliver'd, 'tis far from it: And the same may be said of that Form of Supplication, *We beseech thee to hear us good Lord*, which being put up every time for some distinct Grace, or Mercy, cannot be reckon'd a vain Repetition.

Thus having shew'd you what are not vain Repetitions, and likewise freed our Church-Ser-

vice from them, let us see what are such, and how you can clear *Extempore*-Prayers from them.

Battology then, or vain Repetitions, is when Men think to be heard for their much speaking, when too great a stress is laid upon the multitude and variety of Words: And this is occasion'd by a vain Opinion, That God is more pleas'd with long Prayers than short; which puts Men upon lengthning their Prayers by varied Phrases, to run out their Petitions into many Words, and to ask the same things in new and changeable Expressions.

Now this naturally leads to vain Repetitions, and they that too much affect this way, must necessarily fall into them; and this is too notorious in the *Extempore* Men, who many times pump hard for Matter and Words, and when these fail, fly to the Art of Variations, and piece out their Prayers with these vain Repetitions.

But you observe another thing of the Pharisees, that is, the place where they went to Pray, which you say was the Temple, the Synagogues, and other publick Places, as if the place were an infallible sign of their Purity: And hereby you would resemble our Prayers to theirs.

Sir, Our publick Places of Worship, are with Our Blessed Saviour, and his Apostles in the Temple and House of God, Dedicated, and set apart for that purpose; from whence Our Blessed Saviour whip'd the Buyers and Sellers that profan'd it.

Whereas yours are in private Houses, and Conventicles, where beside other Fraud and Deceit,

ceit, there remain those that make Merchandize of the People, and turn Hucksters of the Word of God.

But there is one thing more that you blame in the Prayers of the Church, that is, the Peoples reading half the Psalms and Hymns, and saying almost half the Prayers, and being the only Petitioners in the far greater part of the Litany.

But pray Sir, why may not the People join as well in reading as in singing the Psalms and Hymns? Is there any difference in these things, with respect to God? Or is he more pleas'd or displeas'd, think you, with the one than the other? 'Tis Superstition to think so, and therefore take heed of it.

As for all such Prayers, as relate to Ministerial Absolution, Benediction, Consecration, or Administration of the Holy Sacraments, these being peculiar to the Minister's Office, are perform'd by him alone: But for such other Prayers as relate to Confession of Sin, the imploring of Grace, and the Aids and Assistances of a good Life, these concern the People as well as Priest, and may be perform'd by both together, to unite their Affections and encrease their Fervency.

Beside, many Ancient Writers plainly testify, That this Alternate way of praising God, was used from the Beginning, and hath continued down through all the Ages of the Church. *Pliny* tells us, That the *Pliny lib. 10.* Christians sang their Hymns *secum invicem*, alternately and by Parts. *Ignatius* is said to have brought in this Usage in the Church of *Antioch*. And many of the Fathers make mention of the

Use of Antiphones and Responses in the Worship of God, which plainly proves not only the Ancient Use of Liturgies, but that the People bore a part in them.

But my Sermon (say you) stiles the Minister the Mouth of the People, to make known their Requests unto God; and how is it agreeable with this and the Holy Scriptures, for the People to say half the Prayers, when we read ordinarily of no more than *Amen* to be said by them?

Sir, Though the Minister be truly said to be the Mouth of the People, to offer up their Prayers unto God, yet the People are requir'd to join with him, and with one Mind, and one Mouth, to glorifie their Maker: And how can this be done, if their Lips may not be open'd, nor their Mouth shew forth his Praise? And tho' we read, That he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, said only *Amen* at the Priest's Blessing, or giving of Thanks, that is, at the Consecration of the Holy Eucharist; yet St. *Jerom* tells us, That *Populus cum Sacerdote loquitur in precibus*, The People speak with the Priest in the other Prayers.

But the Women, saith a Brother of yours, are forbidden to speak in the Church; and therefore, that part of the Congregation at least, is debar'd from the *Antiphones* and *Responses*.

Sir, For the compoling and directing of Prayers for publick Worship, and likewise the teaching and instructing the People, this way of speaking being an Act of Authority, is peculiar to the Minister, and is forbidden to Women in the Church; but for joining in the Words of Confession, and Supplication, this being an
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Act of Humility and Subjection, is allow'd to the Female Sex, who have Sins to confess, and Souls to save as well as Men.

Thus I have consider'd the Stroaks added to the Picture of the Pharisee: If they have rather marr'd, than mended the Matter, and only serv'd to shew you the Spots and Deformity of your Worship, you may thank your self. I am

S I R,

Oct. 22th,
1697.

Yours,

M. H.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I X.

S I R,

YOur Answer to mine of *June* 17th, brings you (you say) to the very Dregs of my Sermon. But why is that unfavoury Word to be given to a Sermon, especially by one that is so great an Admirer of Preaching? Why, 'tis for bringing *Extempore*-Prayer from the very Dregs of Popery; which yet will not make it unfavoury in some Mens Nostrils, tho' it came from the bottomless Pit.

When to shew it a late Invention, I told you, that Antiquity makes mention only of two ways of Praying; the one by immediate Inspiration, and the other by the use of publick Forms: You cry out, This is unparallel'd! What, is there no way of secret Ejaculatory Family Prayer, made mention of in Scripture, or Antiquity besides these? But, Sir,

You forget, That 'tis the solemn Prayers of publick Worship, that is the subject of our Debate, which as St. *Chrysostom* tells us, were in the Days of the Apostles, and some Ages after, perform'd by Inspiration; and when that ceas'd, the Use of publick Forms hath been prov'd and deriv'd down ever since: So that what you say of Secret Ejaculatory Family Prayer, in which a greater Freedom hath been ever allow'd, is nothing to our Purpose, and all your Out cries thereupon, are both frivolous and impertinent.

In your granting the Preliminaries, you own the creating and continuing Divisions, to be one
of

• of the principal Wiles of *Romish* Emissaries: But to save the Credit of free Prayer, you would have Uniformity one of the main Tools they act by.

Sir, Those subtle Agents are too cunning to act with Tools, that are not fit and proper for the Work; they know well enough, that joining together in the same Forms and Way of Worship, is the best means to promote Peace and Unity, which is none of their Business; and they never hope to make that an Instrument of Division any other way, than by disparaging and destroying it; they have found by Experience, that free Prayer is the proper Tool for their Work, and therefore have been whetting that, and their Wits too to promote it, as the best Engine they can work by.

But is not the New Uniformity (say you) a standing Evidence, and Occasion of our Dissensions? Yes; but how? Why just as our Blessed Saviour is said to bring not Peace on Earth, but a Sword: Which must not be understood, as if the Gospel of Christ had any natural Tendency to War and Disturbance, but that Mens corrupt Natures and Designs would take Occasion from thence to fall into them: Neither is there any Tendency in Uniformity to create, but extinguish Divisions; and yet such is the Depravation and Perverseness of some Mens Natures, as to turn Antidotes into Poison, and make the very Instruments of Peace become the Engines of Discord.

But you cannot believe the Stories of *Cummin* and *Heth*; Why so? Can any Matter of Fact be confirm'd with better Evidence, the one from the Memorials of the Queen's Council-board, and the other from the Records of a Bishop's See? You would believe any thing that made for
free

free Prayer upon half the Evidence; a little glimmering Light peeping through a cranny, can shew you the Excellency, but the brightest Light of Noon-Day can't make you see the Danger and Deformity of it. Is not this gross Partiality?

But 'tis a Mystery (say you) that these Stories should not come abroad, till about 120 Years after the Matter of Fact. Sir,

Have not some Truths slept much longer, especially when there was no Occasion for awaking them? The Divisions at that time, and long after, were but few and inconsiderable, and there was little or no Dread or Danger of them, which might make these and other Passages of like Nature, pass away unobserved; but when Divisions came to multiply, and by the encrease of Sects to threaten the Government, the common Safety put Men upon a farther Search into the Rise of them, to observe what was before neglected; and Divine Providence, for wise ends, may bring some things to light, which had lain a while and slept in Darkness. But the Doctor who publish'd these things, had a Fire brand in his Tail: Why so? Why for shewing Mr. *Baxter* and Mr. *Jenkins* the Rise and Progress of those Divisions, whence they came, and whither they tend; and cautioning them against the Evil and Mischief of them: And is it not better to cry Fire, to prevent the Danger, than silently suffer it to spread, and put a whole Kingdom into a Combustion?

And yet your reading of Fire and Sword throughout the Book, renders, say you, the Stories the more suspected.

Sir, There is no Fire or Sword in that Book, that tends to destroy, but (like the flaming Sword that guarded Paradise) serves only to defend both Church and Country, and all the Heat you complain

plain of in that Learned Doctor, seems to be no other than a Zeal, to shew the Cause and Cure of our Divisions, which else may not only inflame, but consume us ; and this, one would think, should rather incline, than hinder you from the Belief of it.

But you farther doubt the Truth of these Stories, from my Inconsistence in relating of them ; for you have two Accounts (you say) of mine concerning this Matter, in which there is some Difference.

Sir, The first of these was a private Paper, never design'd for the Press, and written when I had not the Book by me, nor any Opportunity of examining the Matter and Circumstances of the Fact ; the other is Printed upon a full and due Examination of the whole.

Now, Which of these, think you, should give you the Measures in this Relation ? Or who would lay any Stress, yea, so much as mention such an imperfect and suppress'd Paper, that had not some By-end to serve in so doing ? So that this is a mere Cavil, and only betrays some feeble Endeavours to support a sinking Cause, that must catch at such slender Twigs to keep it up.

But the World (say you) is full of Shams, and designing Persons have selfish Projects to carry on. But is there no Truth in the World, because there are many Shams and Falshoods ? And is nothing to be believ'd, because the Credit of too many things is supported by false Evidence and selfish Projects ? This, Sir, will run you into all Scepticism, and make you not only doubt, but deny the best attested Relations in any kind, and therefore take heed of it.

But don't you, in the following Words, very fairly arraign the Government, by asserting the
*Act of Uniformity to be the Spring of all the Discord,
 Persecution*

Persecution and Distraction the Nation hath groan'd under ? And that the King and Parliament were acted by sham Plots, and scandalous Intrigues in making it : These are bold Speeches ; for which, I leave you to be accountable to your Superiors. Only I must observe, what a seeming Pleasure you take in talking of Plots, and making use of them to serve your own ends, which shews your good Will to the Government, if it act not just as you would have it.

But at last, you will grant that the Monks and Jesuits have too successfully acted their Parts, and play'd their Games among all Parties : Why then will you not believe this Matter of Fact before us, when scarce any of their doings hath been more plainly prov'd or more faithfully recorded ? It seems you can believe any thing that makes for your Purpose and Interest, but nothing against it ; and the true Reason of this Incredulity of yours in this Matter, is not the want of sufficient Evidence, but because you have no Mind to believe it.

What follows this for a Page or two, are such rude Clamors and Calumnies against Kings, Bishops, Priests, and all conformable Members of the Church of *England*, that I cannot think fit to waste Ink or foul Paper in transcribing them, and much less to waste Time in replying to them.

When you had thus vented your Spleen, you proceed, p. 162. to renew your Diffidence, and deny that Popish Emissaries introduc'd free Prayer into these Kingdoms, tho' you own they us'd and abus'd it, and did many as bad and worse things ; yet whatever you think, you will not believe, that so good a thing as free Prayer, should have so bad an Original.

After this, to shew that you cannot speak or think of this with any Patience, that the Idol of
free

free Prayer, by which all your Conventicles are supported, should be thus abus'd; you fall again into another Fit of raving and railing Rhetorick, opening your foul Mouth, and belching out many false and impudent Accusations against many Bishops and Learned Men; acting the same part with *Heb* and *Cummin*, in reviling the Liturgy as a Translation of the Mass, and crying up free Prayer as the only Spiritual way of Praying, to continue the Imposition on the People; which sort of Ribaldry continues to the end of the Letter, which is so far from needing or deserving any Answer, that 'tis fit only to be doom'd to Eternal Silence; and 'twere but just to stop the Mouths of such as utter it.

And yet in the Close of the Letter, as if you had a Patent for reviling, and would engross the Honor of being the Accuser of the Brethren, you gravely caution me against reproaching the Church, for which as I know no Cause; so you may assure your self, there is no Fear from

S I R,

Your hearty Friend,

M. H.

L E T-

L E T T E R XX.

S I R,

IN your Reply to my Letter concerning Bishop *Hall*, the first thing you fall foul upon, is the Order of Bishops, and question whether it be an Order distinct from and superior to Presbyters, *Jure Divino*; looking upon it as a great Grievance, that you should be requir'd to give your Assent and Consent to it.

Sir, That Christ appointed two distinct Orders of Ministers in his Church, *viz.* the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy Disciples, is a Matter too evident in Holy Scripture to be deny'd; for they are every-where distinguish'd from each other, and rank'd under different Names and Titles, which they would not be, if there were no Distinction between them; for which, see St. *Luke* vi. 13. *Mark* iii. 13, 14.

That the Office of the Twelve was not only distinct from, but superior to that of the Seventy, is no less apparent from the Order in which they are reckon'd; for the Apostles are always plac'd and rank'd before the other,

Ephes. 4. 11. *He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors, and some Teachers*; and elsewhere, *He gave first Apostles, and secondarily Pastors and Teachers*, where *First* signifies not only the Order of

Time, but the Order of Dignity and Employment; for the Apostles not only presid'd over, but appointed, ruled, and directed the other: And as the Apostles died, some of the Seventy were

were elected into their Number, and advanc'd to their place, as *Matthias* was into the place of *Judas*, which must im-

Acts 1. 26.

ply a Primacy of Order, and Dignity in the Apostolical Office; for the preferring another is never to the same or worse Station, but always to something higher and better, than he was in before: But here you are wont to say, *That though the Apostles were superior to the Seventy in Office, yet not in Power and Jurisdiction.* But,

Sir, Does not a Superiority in Office, necessarily imply a Superiority of Power, without which, 'tis no better than an empty Name? Hath not every Office some degree of Power annex'd to it? And when any is advanc'd to an higher Office, does he not exercise a Power in things, which he had no Authority to do before? This is too obvious to be gain-said: And consequently must not the Apostolical Office, to which some of the Seventy were wont to be advanc'd, be necessarily accompanied with some higher Degrees of Authority and Jurisdiction? For else, they were advanced to nothing when they were elected or promoted to it; 'tis absurd to say, they succeeded only to what they had before: And what would the Apostolical Office over other Church-Officers signifie, if they had no Power to oversee and govern them?

But that the Apostles both had, and exercis'd a Power over them, the Holy Scripture and Primitive Antiquity may abundantly satisfy you

For, we find *St. James* the Apostle, and first Bishop of *Jerusalem*; not only presiding in the great Council held there, but likewise by his own Authority deciding the Matters debated in

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it, about the Gentil Converts; speaking in that commanding Style, *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, to lay upon them no greater Burdens, than these necessary things, &c. after

which we find *Timothy* Ordain'd Bishop of *Ephesus*, and exercising Episcopal Jurisdiction over that

1 Tim. 1. 3. Church, which extended over all

1 Tim. 3. 1. the proconsular *Asia*, in which he

Ch. 9. 11. 5. 22. commanded that the Laity be diligently instructed, the Clergy provided with a competent Maintenance, admitting none to be Deacons, but upon due Examination, and Ordaining none to be Elders or Presbyters, till they had well-perform'd the Office of a Deacon, receiving Accusations against them, and putting guilty Persons to an open Shame; all which, are Acts of Power and Jurisdiction. Again,

We find *Titus* left in *Crete*, to set in Order the things that were wanting, and to Ordain Elders in every City: By which

Tit. 1. 5. it appears, That he had an Episcopal Power confer'd upon him, to do that in *Crete*, which the Presbyters that were there before, had not; and this Power extended not only to the setting in order what was wanting, and the ordaining of Elders, but

Tit. 2. 15. likewise to the rebuking of obstinate Offenders with all Authority; first, admonishing them, and if they persisted in their Obstinacy, punishing them

Chap. 3. 10. with the Censures of the Church, and rejecting them from the Communion of it, which are all Acts of Power and Jurisdiction.

But this Power (say some) was only Temporary, and to last no longer, than the Days of the

the Apostles, who were the first Planters of these Churches. Why so? Was there not the same Use and Necessity of these things in the following Times, as there was in the Days of the Apostles? Is there not a constant need of ordaining Elders, and exercising Discipline and Censures in the succeeding Ages of the Church, as well as the first? Again, where hath Christ limited this Power, and made it Temporary? Yea, hath he not plainly made it perpetual, by promising to be with them to the End of the World? Which could not be with them in their own Persons, who died in a little Time after, but with them in their Successors, who follow'd them in their Office, to whom the same Promise of Assistance, and Encouragement is given to the End of the World. Beside,

Does not Ecclesiastical History give us a particular Account who succeeded them in their several Churches? A Catalogue of whom you may find in *Eusebius*, and many other Writers: So that nothing in Antiquity is more plain, than that the Apostles had a Power over others, for the well-ordering and governing the Church, and that this Power was deriv'd down to their Successors the Bishops, who have exercis'd the same in the several Ages of the Church ever since.

Which Form of Government being first Instituted by Christ, and seconded by the Practice of his Apostles, and succeeded to in the primitive Churches by our Saviour's express Approbation, is abundantly enough to make it an Order distinct from, and superior to Presbyters, *Jure Divino*; and consequently, there is little Reason why you should think it a Grievance to assent and consent to that, which the Christian Church hath in all Ages assented and consented to.

But here you fly to *Scotland*, and would know what I think of that and other Countries, that have cast off the Government of the Church by Bishops.

Sir, Though I have no Inclination to meddle with the Affairs of any other Church; yet since the Importunity of your Argument requires an Answer, I must tell you, That as particular Persons and Bodies of Men, may be guilty of Schism, by breaking off from the Communion and Discipline of a National Church; so a whole Nation or Country may be justly charg'd with it in breaking off from the Communion and Discipline of the Catholick Church, of which that is a Member.

And this is the unhappy Case of your beloved *Scotland*, which by casting off the Ancient, Apostolical and Primitive Discipline and Government of the Church, by Bishops, and likewise by laying aside a Liturgy or Forms of Prayer for publick Worship, both which having been received in the Christian Church ever since its first Establishment, is thereby become Schismatical: For by so doing, it hath cut it self off from the One Body of the Catholick Church, and is become no longer a sound Part of it, but a Sect and Excrecence of it.

But you will say, what then, will you condemn all the Inhabitants of that Country, as living in the Grievous and Damning Sin of Schism?

No, Sir, There were some who voluntarily and violently, acted to the laying aside the Liturgy and Episcopacy in that Church, and thereby wilfully brake the Communion, Worship, and Discipline of the Christian Church, and these are truly and properly guilty of the hainous Sin

Sin of Schism; which if not repented of, and amended in Time, will prove as fatal to them hereafter, as 'tis to the Church here: But beside these,

There are many Thousands in that distracted Kingdom, who abhorr'd and endeavour'd to prevent that wide and miserable Breach in the Catholick Church: But being over-power'd, were forc'd to see and bewail that miserable Rent made in it, and can only wish and pray for the Peace and Repairs of *Jerusalem*. Now these are no ways to be charg'd with the Guilt of this Schism; for here the Succession being altogether involuntary, 'tis to be reckon'd their Unhappiness, but not their Fault: And the like may be said of the Inhabitants of some other Countries. who being by the Misfortune of Times and Place, depriv'd of that way of Worship and Discipline, that should unite them to the Catholick Church, may not be charg'd with that Schism, which they could neither foresee nor prevent; but being by unavoidable Necessity brought under it, God Almighty will have Mercy upon them, and make up that in the Ever-blessed Society of Saints hereafter, which they want of the Communion of Saints here.

But do you not see (say you) in the Letter of *June 28th*, how those whose Turn it is to be the Establish'd Church in that Kingdom, may turn their own Artillery upon you, and talk to your disaffected Brethren in the same strain, as you do to us; and tell them, That all the Distractions and Divisions of that Church, are to be put upon the score of their Disobedience? May'nt they be Characteriz'd for stubborn, unquiet Schismatics, as we now are? No, Sir, 'tis one thing to stick to the truly Ancient,

Primitive, and Apostolical Discipline and way of Worship, and another to set up, and promote new upstart Ways and Models in both; the one is to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Church, and the other to break it. Now in the Kingdom of *Scotland*, that prevailing Party that laid aside the ancient Discipline and Worship of the Catholick Church, to set up those new-fangl'd Models, are truly branded for Schismaticks, for breaking into different Factions and Communions, whereby they divide the Body of Christ, and may be justly said to create Distractions and Divisions in the Church, whereas they who adher'd to the ancient Doctrine and Discipline of the Catholick Church, and would willingly have preserv'd both; these can no ways be charg'd with the Schisms and Divisions of that Church, for these differ as much from the other, as the Keepers of the Peace do from the Breakers of it: And you know, 'tis unreasonable to charge the same Disorders and Disobedience, upon those that endeavour to keep the Peace, as upon those who make it their Business to break it; so that the Artillery you speak of, still points to you, and cannot be turn'd upon those against whom you level it.

But it may be your Case (say you) in another Century, if any thing happen to be requir'd, which you think unlawful, to fall under the like Difficulties of the Government.

Sir, That there is nothing unlawful requir'd in the present Government, I suppose you are pretty well satisfied; and therefore your Schism, in these Circumstances, is both unreasonable and inexcusable: And 'tis to be hoped, That the Members of the Church of *England*, will in no Century, either voluntarily and causelessly cut off
them.

selves, or be violently cut off by any others, from the Worship and Discipline of the Catholick Church: But if it should so happen (which God forbid) our Duty will be, not to applaud, but lament the Schism, to enjoy as much as we may of the Communion of the Church, and to pray and wait for a better Union, and fuller Enjoyment of it.

But there is one Objection more urg'd by your Party, against the Authority of Bishops, *viz.* If the Bishops Power be *Jure Divino*, how come they to execute it by Lay-Chancellors?

Sir, Beside the Spiritual Power committed to Bishops, as Successors to the Apostles, Church-Censurers, Ordination, &c. which are executed by themselves in Person, there are other things *Circa Spiritualia*, which are by Law committed to their Care and Inspection, as the Cognizance of Wills and Testaments, many Cases about Matrimony, Alimony and Divorce, about Tithes, Dilapidations, Defamation, &c. which Things containing many intricate Cases, and requiring more time than the Bishop can well spare, from the weightier Duties of his Office, he is impower'd to commission one Learned in the Canon and Civil Laws, to hear and determine such Matters; so that as *Moses* did appoint inferior Officers and Judges to determine small Matters, whilst the weightier things were brought to him: So the Bishop by the Allowance of the Church, is permitted to have these Officers under him, to take off part of his Burden in ordinary Matters, and to dispatch some of his Business, when he is otherwise employ'd or hinder'd.

But you publish (say you) such Excommunications as are decreed by Lay-Chancellors, according to the Canon.

And why not? For though the Lay-Chancellors, by the Authority of the Bishop, may decree the Sentence for not hearkning to the Church; yet being an Ecclesiastical Censure, 'tis never executed by him, but either by the Bishop in Person, or some other Spiritual Person, that hath full Authority to do it; and when this Censure is thus regularly decreed and pronounc'd, why may we not publish it, that others may know and avoid them, and according to our Saviour's Order, look upon them *as a heathen Man and a Publican?*

Thus I have consider'd your main Objections, concerning the Order of Bishops. What you farther offer concerning Bishop *Hall*, shall be consider'd in my next. I am

S I R,

Tours,

M. H.

L E T.

LETTER XXI.

To J. M.

S I R,

IN your Letter concerning Bishop *Hall*, after a few flings and reflections upon the Order of Bishops, which I endeavour'd to rectifie and remove in my last. You tell me, That you are far better pleas'd with some Bishops, than we think you are, and particularly instance in Arch-Bishop *Usher*, and Bishop *Hall*, wishing there were many Hundreds more of them in *England*.

Now these Reverend Persons are much beholding to you, that you have not so great an Averseness to them as to some others; But what is the Reason of this great Kindness to those Excellent Men? Why, some By-End to be sure, for 'tis not out of any Respect to their Order; which you will not allow to be distinct from, nor Superior to Presbyters; No, nor yet for their Learning, and great Abilities in deciding Controversies in Religion, for you are not like (you say) to refer to their final Decision, any Matters in Debate between us in their present Constitution: Whence then should this Honourable Esteem of yours for these Great Men proceed? Why, this you will tell me in the next Words, 'twas for their Exemplary Piety, discover'd by their painfulness in Preaching, and likewise for their great Temper and Moderation in Ecclesiastical Matters.

As

As for their Exemplary Piety that was chiefly seen in their Pious Lives, and Zealous adhering to the Establish'd Worshipp of the Church of *England*, and likewise by sticking as close and as long as they could to the Primitive Discipline and Government of that Church: But you pass by these Eminent, and Exemplary Instances of their Piety, because they do not serve your purpose, and instead of them, take notice of their painfulness in Preaching, and their great Moderation.

Now, though painfulness in Preaching be indeed a very good Commendation in all that are call'd to it, yet I think a Vigilant care, and diligence in ruling well the Church of God, and setting in order things that are wanting in it, is a more necessary and commendable Qualification of a Bishop; and indeed, if you will rightly consider the multitude, weight and difficulty of the Business that appertains to their Office, you will find it enough to employ the Time and Thoughts of the ablest Overseer. Besides,

The Bishops having generally spent their Younger Years in painful Preaching, and being seldom advanc'd to that Office, till they come to their Elder Years, may by reason of the decay of Strength and Voice, and other Infirmities that attend that Age, be excus'd from that painfulness, and may more usefully employ the Time, and Experience of those Years, in well-governing the Church, over which they are appointed Overseers: But if any beside their other Work have strength and leisure enough for this Exercise, they may, and ought to make use of it, and you know some Time is by our Reverend Bishops very frequently and profitably employ'd this way.

Your

Your next Commendation of those Reverend Fathers, is their Temper, and Moderation in Ecclesiastical Matters: Now this, if rightly understood, is an Excellent Vertue, and a very useful and necessary Qualification, of all Governors both in Church and State; But how frequently this is mistaken and mis-apply'd, I shew'd you in a former Letter on that Subject, and I fear we shall find something of it in the present Case, as may be easily gather'd from what you relate of these great Men, concerning the Discipline and Prayers of the Church: For the better clearing whereof, you must Note,

That 'twas the misfortune of those two great Prelates, to live in very bad Times, when the Liturgy, and Episcopacy (of both which they were strong Asserters) were laid aside, and thereby both the ancient Worship and Discipline of the Church turn'd out of Doors; now those two Pious, and Learned Bishops, not only lamented the miserable Rents and Ruins made in the Church by this means, but endeavour'd to repair, and keep up as much of it, as in that broken State of things they could: And this was the occasion of that Model of Primitive Episcopacy, drawn up by Arch-bishop *Usher*, of which you make so frequent mention; and the same was the occasion of that Moderator mention'd by Bishop *Hall*, to supply the place of the Bishop, the design of both which was to preserve so much of the Power and Jurisdiction belonging to the Primitive Order of Bishops, as those unhappy Times would admit of, and like Men in a Storm, when they could not save all, to save as much as they might. Now this, Sir, proceeded not from any such coldness and indifferency towards the Order, as you vainly imagine, and miscall Moderation, but from an earnest

earnest and affectionate Zeal to preserve and continue it.

As for what you alledge from Bishop *Hall's* complaining of your Faults of Consistorial Officers, that was design'd not to remove, but reform their Courts, to take away all just Exceptions against them, that the People might be the better reconcil'd to the Order, and yield the more ready Obedience to the Authority and Jurisdiction annex'd to it; for if you would have Courts of Justice laid aside for the Abuses of some Under-officers in them, you might soon reform away all Civil, as well as Ecclesiastical Courts.

Thus having shew'd you the Judgment of those two Reverend Prelates concerning the Government of the Church: You would have me next consider Bishop *Hall's* Sentiments as to Prayer; and here you grant, that as he us'd, so he vindicated the Liturgy; but you never met with a Word (say you) to justify the imposing it, and no other, in publick Prayer.

Sir, Hath not the Liturgy been impos'd ever since the Reformation, and no other for publick Worship? And was it not the design of that Bishop in his Vindication of it, to perswade all People to use and joyn in it as so impos'd? Is not the faithful and constant reading of the Prayers, one main Article of enquiry in all Episcopal Visitations? And did this Pious Bishop think you, neglect so weighty a Part and Duty of his Office? No, Sir, he very diligently and devoutly us'd the Liturgy himself, and strictly kept his Clergy to it, till the Iniquity of the Times put an unwelcome stop to both, from whence he betook himself to conceiv'd Forms of Prayer, to supply the want of the other, the only expedient to fly to in those perilous Times. That this was his Practice,

thence, you may gather from his own Words, for he tells us, that he us'd the same liberty in Prayer, that he did in Preaching; so that as his Sermons were Compos'd, so were his Prayers too: That the former were so, the Elegance and Exactness of them may easily satisfy you; and that he took as much care in speaking to God in Prayer, as he did to the People in Preaching, you may learn from the Reverence he still bore to the Divine Majesty, which kept him to *Solomon's Advice of not being rash with his Mouth, or hasty to utter any thing before God*: So that for your *Extemporary Effusions*, or pouring out present and sudden Conceptions, we never find it us'd or commended by him.

And is it wise or fit think you, to alledge the Salvo's and Expedients of bad Times for Precedents in good ones; and to make Cases of Necessity Rules of Duty and Practice, when that Necessity ceases? 'Twas the Grief of those Pious and Learned Prelates, to see those woful Breaches made in the Government and Service of the Church, which they labour'd to their uttermost to prevent and heal; and had they liv'd to see Episcopacy restor'd to its full Power, and the Liturgy to its ancient Use and Practice, they would no doubt have Blessed God for that happy Day; and with good Old *Simeon* sung their *Nunc Dimittis*, and would then willingly depart in Peace, when their Eyes had seen the Church settled again in Peace, upon the Ancient and Primitive Foundation.

But the good Bishop *Hall* (say you) was no Flatterer of the Times. No, Sir, the Hardships and Sufferings he underwent by them, plainly shew him to be no favourer or flatterer of those Times. His steady Zeal to the King and the Church kept him from all base Compliances with the Enemies of both. But

You

This is omitted in the Print.

You bring a very awkward Argument to prove his Integrity, taken from some passionate Speeches that pass between him and another Prelate, that was after his Metropolitan, which is rather a Blemish than Ornament to his Reputation; and shews what a worthy commender you are of Good Men, to single out the worst Passages of their Lives, to preserve their Memory, and to make use of their Failings to adorn their Character.

But you would fain know how it comes to pass, That conceiv'd Prayer should be so pious and useful a thing in Private, and yet so pernicious, and dangerous a Device when us'd in Publick. Sir,

The Reason hereof is obvious, for conceiv'd Prayer in the retirements of Closet, where they are shut up from the Eyes and Ears of others, can have no Vanity, or Worldly design in it; but being transacted only between God and the Soul, is generally an Argument and Instance of great Sincerity, and here the broken Sighs and Language of a Contrite Heart prove oftentimes the most prevailing Oratory.

Whereas the pouring out many and new Words in publick, may be and often is accompanied with Ostentation, and other Secular Ends: You know the Pharisees made such long Prayers for a pretence to be heard and seen of Men, the better to carry on their Rapine and Oppressions; and too many use them still for a Shew of greater Sanctity, and a Cloak to hide their viler Practices: You cannot be ignorant, that this way of Praying hath been and still is a great Instrument and Occasion of Division, and is made the principal Device of all Teachers to draw Disciples after them.

But how is it consistent (say you) to commend free Prayer in private, and yet too, affirm, That upon

upon the ceasing of Inspiration, Godly Forms were appointed both for publick and private Devotion?

Very well, Sir, for in the publick Assemblies, Forms are necessary, that all People may know their Prayers, and so Pray with the Understanding: And likewise in private Families, where many are to joyn, Forms are expedient for the same reason, and both these since the ceasing of Inspiration, are best perform'd this way: But in the more private and secret Devotions of the Closet, free Prayer may be conveniently used, because thereby every one may better descend to his own particular Wants and Failings, than by any Form Compos'd by others, who cannot be so well acquainted with these things, as themselves. So that these things rightly consider'd, may very well consist together, and each of them may have their proper time and place.

Thus, Sir, I have thoroughly consider'd all that is material in your Letters, and have not willingly omitted any thing, that either needs or deserves an Answer: It remains, that I consider what you add in the Close, against the Account I gave of Bishop *Wilkins*, and the Design of his Book, which shall be done in the next. In the meane time, I am

S I R,

Nov. 23d,
1697.

Your Hearty Friend

and Well-wisher,

M. H.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXII.

S I R,

IN my Answer to what you alledg'd from Bishop *Wilkins's* Gift of Prayer; I told you the Design of that Book, by the Author's own Confession was a mere Novelty, and thence took Occasion to mind you of the Danger of New Inventions and Innovations in Religion. Now to this

You reply, *This is very important Doctrin! Which would have kept Christianity out of the World, and the Pope with all his detestable Enormities in England.* Sir,

Is Reforming, think you, Innovating? Did our pious and learned Reformers make a New Religion, or only restore the Old? They were wise enough to know and distinguish between these; and therefore threw aside only the Hay and Stubble, which some cunning Architects had built upon the Foundation of Christianity, but still kept the Old Foundation and Fabrick of it: And would this have kept Christianity out of the World? Yea, is not this the best way to keep it in it, which else would be buried and lost in Rubbish and Ruin?

Again, Our wise Reformers cast out only the corrupt Additions, and Innovations of Popery, but retain'd all that was truly Ancient, Primitive, and Apostolical; and is this the way to keep the Pope with all his detestable Enormities in *England*? Would you have them lay aside the Gold and precious Stone, together with the Hay and Stubble?

Stubble? And having thus wisely rejected their gray-headed Novelties, shall we receive Innovations of a latter Date, under a Pretence of a farther Advance and Progress in Reformation? This, Sir, is either a Cavil, or a plain Mistake of the Nature and Rule of Reformation.

In the next Paragraph, when I told you, there was no Use or Need of this Artificial Gift, all Christian Churches performing their publick Worship by set prescrib'd Forms:

To this you reply, *Is it not still a Wonder, that this Learned Man should so far forget Antiquity and himself, as to be at such Pains about an useless and needless Gift?*

Sir, That Learned Man did not so much forget Antiquity, as consider the Times in which he wrote, which was when a prevailing Faction had laid aside the Ancient and best Way of publick Prayer, by prescribed Forms: Nor was his Artificial Gift either useless or needless at that time, when he took that Pains about it, being perhaps, the best Expedient that could be thought of to supply the Want of prescrib'd Forms, and to keep up true Devotion amidst the Irreverence and great Indecencies of those Times. And as for what you say of losing his Memory; he not only retain'd his own, but assisted others, by directing to the best way of Praying, when Forms were gone.

But how does it appear (say you) That that great Man saw the bad Effects of this new Experiment in Divinity, and look'd upon it as an Instrument of Division? Sir,

I hope you will allow that great Light of the Church, to see that which every body else sees and knows; for is there any thing more visible, than that this is that Idol and Support of all our Sectaries? Is not a Liturgy the great stumbling

bling Block, that keeps many weak, seduced People from the Church? And free Prayer the Bait that allures them to the Conventicle? And are not all our Divisions founded upon, and upheld by this Artificial Gift and Practice?

But where, and when (say you) did he complain of, or retract this Book? Sir,

If there were no other way, he effectually did it by his own Practice, which is a far better way of doing it, than any Words or Writings: For Actions speak louder than Words; Men may, and often do, speak one thing and think another, and their Practices are a plain Confutation of their Principles; but Actions seldom lye, and the Course of Mens Lives are the best and truest Indication of their Minds.

Now, did not this great Man, upon the Restauration of the Church, plainly abandon this Art, which shew'd his Sense of the Imperfection of it; and betook himself to the Use of the publick Liturgy, which shew'd that his Judgment carried him to that, as much better? This you cannot deny without disparaging the Memory of that great Man, nor grant without disparaging this Artificial Gift, which is a Strait I must leave you to get out of as well as you can.

But the Design of this worthy Man (say you) was not merely to help the Memory, but to excite the Affections, improve the Judgment, and promote the Consolation and Edification of Christians: And there is no doubt to be made of this, for his helping the Memory by mental Forms, when Book-Forms were remov'd, was chiefly to promote those ends, *viz.* to assist them to pray heartily and affectionately with Judgment, and to the Edification of themselves and others: And to this end, advis'd them against long and varied

varied Prayers, to prevent Tautologies, Impertinences, and all unseemly Expressions in this Exercise.

Moreover, he would not have them tie themselves precisely to one particular Form of Words (tho' of their own composing) so as to deny themselves any Liberty of using another, or adding to that; but to furnish themselves with Matter and Words for various Emergencies, so as to be able to add or alter, as Occasion should require. And could the Wisdom of Man direct to a better Method for Piety and Devotion in those bad times?

But 'tis sometimes (say you) not so much the Evidence of Truth, as the Revolutions of Times, that alter Mens Practice, &c.

Take heed, Sir, for this if applied to this great Man, as here without great Impertinence it must be, will disparage his Memory to purpose; by making him a Time-server, and one that steer'd his Course, as the Temptations of prosperous and adverse Times led him: Which is enough to destroy the Credit, both of the Author and the Book, and put all Men out of Conceit with his variable Gift.

What you say and quote, touching his Moderation, is consider'd in another Letter, to which I refer-you.

To what I added in the Close, that we may better estimate Mens Opinions by the Practice of their latter and wiser Age, than the Rawness of younger Years: You reply,

That some who have been sound and hopeful in their Youth, have extreamly degenerated in their riper Years, and from a great Zeal to the Church and Liturgy, have fallen into a great Luke-warmness or Apostacy from both: But,

Sir, Is there any Rule without an Exception? May it not be reasonably hop'd and suppos'd, that the Generality of Men should grow wiser and better, as they grow older? And that the Gravity and Experience of Age, should correct the Rashness and Vanity of their Youth? Tho' it must be granted, That too many, either by Weakness of Judgment, or Strength of Prejudice, or Power of bad Habits and Customs, or Byass of Interest, or other corrupt Inclinations and Designs may be found to do otherwise.

But I hope, you will not here again disparage the Memory of this great Man, by making him one of this Number.

For a Close of all, I must, upon an Impartial Review of the whole, leave it to the Judgment of the Candid Reader, and your own serious Consideration, how much you might grow wiser and better, by following the Example of this great Man, which was, and still is, the hearty Wish and Advice of,

S I R,

Your Cordial Friend,

and Well-Wisher,

M. H.

F L N I S.
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